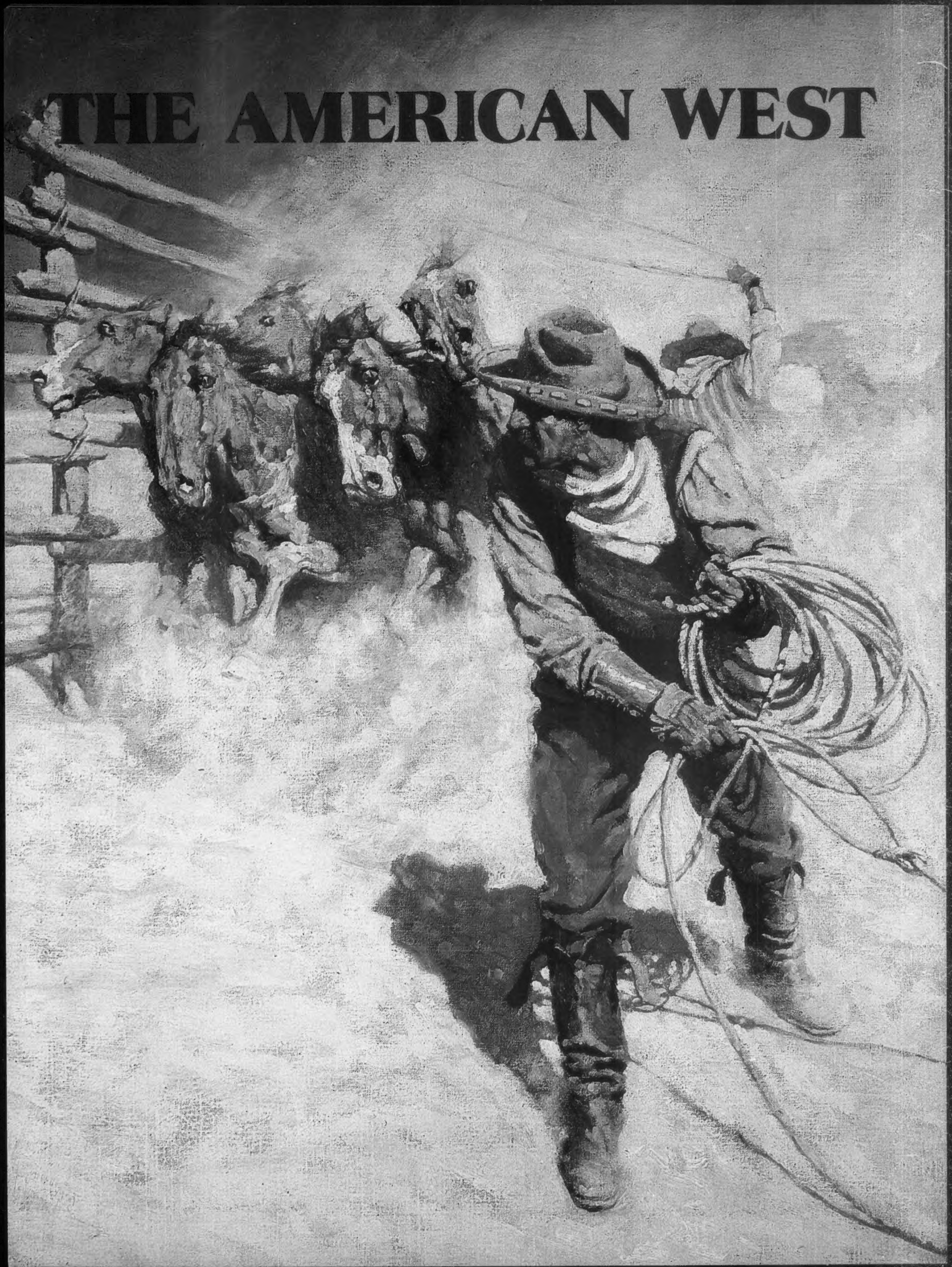
THE AMERICAN WEST



"Above the sea of round, shiny backs the thin loops swirled and shot into volumes of dust. . . ." At age twenty-two, American artist N. C. Wyeth enthusiastically embraced the life of a cowpuncher on his first trip west in 1904. *RG Colorado* (reproduced on the cover of this issue) was painted right out of Wyeth's experience; riders rope mounts for a day of roundup work on the Hashknife Ranch in Colorado. Impressions gained on this trip gave Wyeth inspiration for many of the famous illustrations he painted for western stories and books. "The Western World of N. C. Wyeth," including *RG Colorado* and forty-four other paintings, is on display at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming, through September. For an article on Wyeth's contributions to the art of the West, turn to page 32.

COVER PAINTING FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE BUFFALO BILL HISTORICAL CENTER, CODY, WYOMING

"THE BATTLE OF SAN JACINTO, TEXAS" BY L. M. D. GUILLAUME, 1892,
DETAIL OF THE ORIGINAL

COLLECTION OF THE R. W. NORTON ART GALLERY, SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA

Eighteen minutes of vengeful bloodletting at San Jacinto on April 21, 1836, changed the course of Texas history. General Sam Houston (astride rearing horse, above) led his ragtag and unruly Texans to a decisive victory over the Mexican general Santa Anna and his troops, assuring the independence of Texas and the elevation of Houston to the pantheon of folk heroes. A critical account and evaluation of the career of this popular figure is offered by a contemporary Texan on page 4.

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AMID DESTRUCTION from the great San Francisco earthquake of April 18, 1906, famous western photographer Carleton E. Watkins (above, center) is led away from his ravaged studio by his son (left). Ill and nearly blind, the aging Watkins lost a lifetime accumulation of negatives when the quake and subsequent fire destroyed his studio at 9th and Market streets, on the top floor of the building at right. For a review of Watkins's influence and accomplishments, as well as his troubled life, turn to page 14.

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TEXAS GIANT OF CONTRADICTIONS: SAM HOUSTON

by Joe B. Frantz

HE WAS a man of extremes.

A giant of a man by the standards of the nineteenth century, Sam Houston would be a big man nowadays. Six feet two, says his army record; six feet six, said an admirer. No matter, he was large. He bore himself like a titan, always a commanding presence without being overbearing. A two-fisted drinker through half of his life, he turned abstemious after his third marriage and gave frequent temperance lectures during his remaining years. A storied Indian fighter, he lived with the Cherokees as a boy and returned to them after he exiled himself from Tennessee. A hater of Mexicans with continuing plans to take over their nation, he treated his captured enemy, General Antonio López de Santa Anna, with magnanimity at a time when Texans were crying for the Mexican generalissimo's blood.

He was a man of contradictions.

According to Texas folklore, you could trace Old Sam's route through the countryside nine months or more after he traveled past: every thirty miles (or a day's journey) you could find a blue-eyed Indian, a sure sign that Sam had camped there. He married an Indian woman while he had an undivorced wife back in Nashville. He married a teen-aged girl when he was a bachelor in his mid-thirties, and he married a girl who was barely twenty when he was pushing fifty.

Nothing in his early life indicated that Houston was headed for empire building. Born on March 2, 1793, near Timber Ridge Church toward the southern end of upland Virginia's Shenandoah Mountains (his home county, Rockbridge, still had only 16,637 inhabitants in 1970), he attended school sporadically until his widowed mother moved her nine children to a wilder frontier west of Maryville, Blount County, Tennessee, in 1807. The teen-ager showed no aptitude for farming or clerking, soon ran away to the far side of the Tennessee River to live with the Cherokees for a year, returned home (apparently less repentant than the Prodigal Son), was fined for beating a drum with such fervor that he upset the workings of a local court, and ducked out on the fine by returning to the Indians, who promptly adopted him and gave him a name, "the Raven." Up to this point Houston sounds like an 1810 version of any rebellious youth of the past twenty years, the worry of his mother, and the despair of her established, nosy neighbors.

Houston again left the Indians to teach school between May and November in 1812. Although he probably had no more than a year of schooling himself, he seems to have

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Adventures crowded Sam Houston's life. Pictured here at the beginning of his rise to popularity and power in Texas, Houston had already gained fame for bravery in Indian wars under Andrew Jackson, had served in the United States Congress and as governor of Tennessee, and had lived as a brother among the Cherokees. His magnetic leadership brought the forty-three-year-old Houston to the center of power in Texas during the break with Mexico in 1836.

"GENERAL SAM HOUSTON AT THE BATTLE OF SAN JACINTO"; PAINTING BY STEPHEN SEYMOUR THOMAS COLLECTION OF THE SAN JACINTO MUSEUM OF HISTORY ASSOCIATION, DEER PARK, TEXAS

CULVER PICTURES, NEW YORK

Daring and heroic, twenty-year-old Lieutenant Sam Houston led his men against the Creeks at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend in 1814. Ignoring an arrow in his thigh and the ministrations of a companion (above), Houston showed such leadership that General Andrew Jackson took notice and thereafter promoted his career with paternal concern.

been a successful teacher (which ought to give certification boards some pause). But he could spell and he could read, though he was deficient in mathematics, and he had educated himself in frontier lore and military tactics, which should have kept his back-country kids in awe, if nothing else.

In March of 1813 Houston joined the Creek Indian War by enlisting as a private in the Thirty-ninth Infantry, and began a fairly rapid rise to officer status. A year later he met General Andrew Jackson, a man who would give as much direction as anyone could to the erratic flight of this Raven. When in late March, 1814, Houston showed extraordinary leadership at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, Jackson commended his young third lieutenant, his words undoubtedly helping to assuage the pain of Houston's severe shoulder and leg wounds. The injured shoulder would pain him periodically for the remainder of his life.

After furloughs for his health and a stint on the state adjutant's staff in Nashville, Houston was named subagent to the Cherokees. An unexpected spin-off from this assignment resulted in a lifelong dislike for one of the South's sainted heroes, John C. Calhoun. After the secretary of war had received Houston and a Cherokee delegation to Washington with his outward southern courtesy, he called the young officer aside to upbraid him for appearing before a cabinet officer in the dress of a savage. Houston's retort that the Indians were more likely to accept him as a true son if he dressed as they did made no dent on Calhoun's rigid sense of etiquette.

Shortly Calhoun summoned Houston to charge him with complicity in slave smuggling. Houston's answer that, far from smuggling, he had actually attempted to break up a smuggling ring brought an investigation that exonerated him but implicated several congressmen friendly with the ring. When Calhoun failed to follow up on the disclosures or even to express regret to Houston for having accused him wrongly, Houston in a huff (not his last one) resigned his commission in the army, renouncing a career that he had apparently intended to follow for life. Such impulsiveness would not disappear with age.

CULVER PICTURES, NEW YORK

In a demonstration of empathy for the Cherokee Nation, Houston adopted the dress of a chief while serving the Indians as ambassador to Washington in 1830, when the miniature above was painted. Some years earlier, as subagent to the Cherokees, Houston had outraged Secretary of War Calhoun by appearing before him only in breechcloth and blanket.

TOO MANY of his friends, Sam Houston was through. His beloved Cherokees were being moved to the Arkansas River, his army commission was gone, and at the age of twenty-five he owned only a hatful of debts.

The Raven promptly sold his possessions to liquidate his indebtedness, returned to Nashville, and at an age when most men were getting entrenched in their careers, started to read law in the office of Judge James Trimble in 1818. Although the reading should have required a minimum of eighteen months, Houston passed admission to the bar six months later. Meanwhile he played several roles in productions of Nashville's Dramatic Club, including one prophetic run as a drunken porter that brought praise from the audience and the press. In the words of the club's stage manager, Noah M. Ludlow, he had "never met a man who had a keener sense of the ridiculous . . . nor one who could more readily assume the ludicrous or the sublime." Forty years later both his Texas critics and admirers would have repeated this verdict.

After a brief fling as a lawyer in Lebanon, thirty miles east of Nashville, where he existed at first on near charity, he returned to Nashville as state adjutant general, with the rank of colonel. Less than three years later his fellow field officers would elect him major general. Meanwhile in October, 1819, with Jackson's help, Houston was named attorney general for the Nashville district, after having turned down an offer from the despised Secretary Calhoun, again recommended by Jackson, to be agent to the Cherokees. With Jackson's assistance Houston was becoming a man to notice.

Houston was paying back the old Chief's sponsorship by loyal support of Jackson's presidential ambitions. He stood for Congress, unopposed, in the late summer of 1823, in part to have a wider forum from which to present Jackson's record to the people. Foreshadowing a later stand, he made his maiden speech in Congress a call for recognition of Greek independence. As Llerena Friend, Houston's most nearly definitive biographer, so succinctly summed up, "In general, he supported in the House the measures which Jackson approved in the Senate." When

PAINTING BY WILLIAM H. HUDDLE; DETAIL OF THE ORIGINAL

Houston's first term was completed, he was easily reelected. He had not been an outstanding congressman on the issues of the day, but he had been devoted to his constituency and to his mentor. That type of congressman gets returned forever.

Houston tried to marry about this time, and traveled all the way from Washington to South Carolina for the event. There a Miss M—was waiting, but the couple decided to postpone such a step until Houston could quit campaigning for reelection and settle some "*personal* difficulties." Later he wrote a relative that he was continuing "the full enjoyments of the sweets of single blessedness." History does not record what became of the romance, except that it never came off.

In 1827, when he was thirty-four years old, Houston decided to make his big jump. With Jackson's support he announced for governor of Tennessee. Basically he ran a one-issue campaign; like most westerners he believed that his section was suffering for lack of internal improvements. Houston was elected governor handily by a four-to-three margin (57 percent) over his opponent. Meanwhile he pushed Jackson's candidacy for president. He was achieving a reputation as the one man who could handle the fractious Jackson. In one case, for instance, he refused to deliver a letter from Jackson to Samuel L. Southard, secretary of the navy, because he thought the old Chief was unnecessarily inflammatory. Like an obedient pupil, Jackson rewrote a milder version acceptable to his protégé.

HOUSTON's first term as governor, while not spectacular, moved along harmoniously enough so that he was considered a shoo-in for a second term. In fact, his name was being bandied about as a possible successor to Andrew Jackson as president whenever Old Hickory should be elected and serve out his years. The idea was not far fetched. Tennessee, a developing western state, had captured the public's imagination. Over the next several decades three Tennesseeans would advance to the White House—Jackson, James K. Polk, and Andrew Johnson.

COLLECTION OF THE TEXAS STATE ARCHIVES, AUSTIN

Several days after his crushing defeat at San Jacinto, Mexican general Santa Anna was captured and led before Houston, who lay on a blanket in the field, suffering from a serious leg wound. The prisoner quickly agreed to order all his troops back to Mexico, bringing an end to the war for Texas independence. The artist of the 1866 painting above has included portraits of a number of San Jacinto heroes in the group around Houston.

In the late 1820s Houston's star shone as brightly as any of them except Jackson's. The governorship of the Volunteer State just might lead to the presidency, as it did for one of Houston's contemporaries, Polk. Why not the same path to national greatness for Houston?

The roadblock was romance. First, the American electorate does not like bachelors for its leaders, especially those with a reputation for being attractive to the ladies. As Houston wrote once in exasperation, "What the devil is the matter with the gals I can't say but there has been hell to pay and no pitch hot!" Everyone had a candidate for his marriage vows; he was, as a thirty-six-year-old bachelor governor, the catch of Tennessee, perhaps of the nation.

Before he completed his campaign, unopposed, for a second term, Houston fell in love. The affair was the kind that Victorian novelists often mooned about—an older half saint, half devil just waiting to be gentled by a pure woman barely come of age. The plot was straight out of *St. Elmo*. For years Houston had dropped by the home of Colonel John Allen at Gallatin during his travels through upper middle Tennessee. At first Colonel Allen had a thirteen-year-old daughter, Eliza, described as having "large blue eyes and yellow hair." Houston, ever gallant, undoubtedly talked to little Eliza each time he visited her father.

The trouble with thirteen-year-old girls is that they grow up, and one day when she was eighteen, Houston, according to one of his biographers, "looked into Eliza's blue eyes and ceased to speak to her of childish things." Despite the disparity of age, Eliza's parents and other relatives

COLLECTION OF THE R. W. NORTON ART GALLERY, SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA

The Lone Star Statesman at the height of his powers and popularity; this fine watercolor, made during the 1840s, is believed to be the work of frontier artist George Catlin. An abundance of Houston portraits exists: it was said that "two classes of people pursued Sam Houston all his life—artists and women."

were undoubtedly thrilled by the prospect of the attraction becoming serious. At eighteen Eliza could be the first lady of Tennessee; in her middle twenties she might be the first lady of the United States. Few parents ambitious for good marriages for their offspring could resist being swept up in the enthusiasm of such prospects.

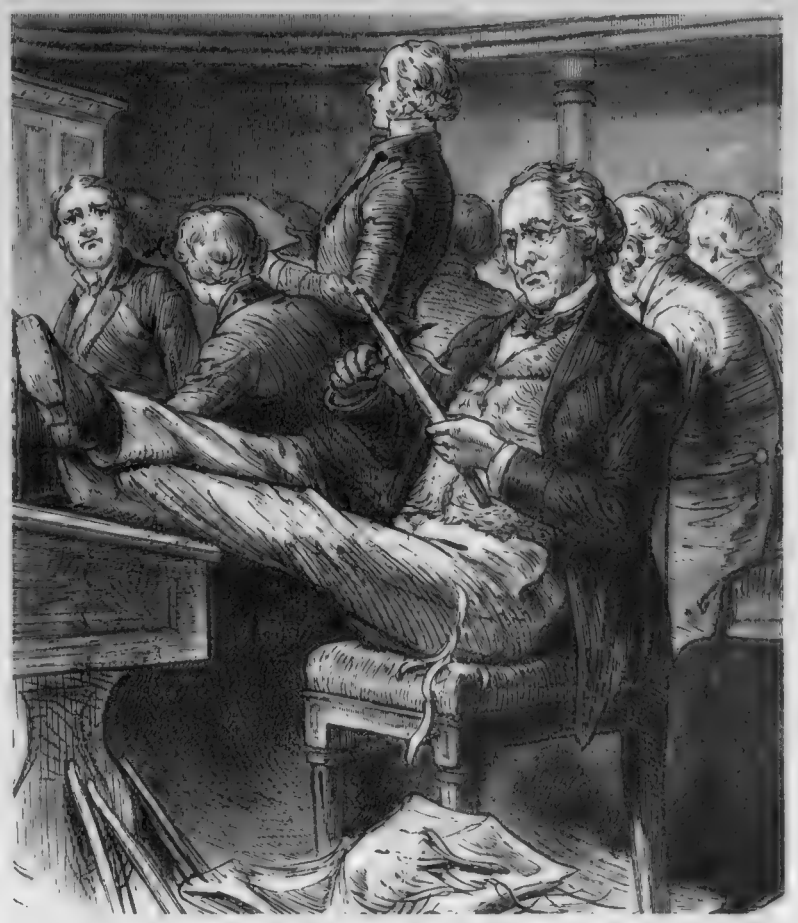
Today Eliza would have laughed and said, "Forget it, you dirty old man." But those were the days when daughters did as their parents bade them; in addition, every old crone in Gallatin was advising Eliza that a brilliant future was unfolding. Apparently Eliza confused prospects with love. She gave Houston her hand. On January 22, 1829, they were married by candlelight in a Presbyterian ceremony in Gallatin, and moved to the Nashville Inn where Houston continued his campaign for a second gubernatorial term. Aside from Houston's political necessities, he seemed to be the most attentive of husbands, and the two of them made a most affectionate couple. They went out little socially, evidently content in each other's company.

But in mid-April it was all over. Houston took his bride, "the only earthly object dear to me," back to her parents and announced that he would never disclose the reasons "to a living person." As he told a boyhood friend, Willoughby Williams: "I can make no explanation. I exonerate this lady [Eliza] freely, and I do not justify myself. I am a ruined man." He promptly resigned as governor of Tennessee. The express to the White House had been derailed.

His silence has left gossips and historians frustrated for a century and a half. They still don't know what happened. A good guess is that Eliza told Houston that she had actually been in love with another man when she had been dazzled by his proposal of marriage, and that she did not love her husband. In keeping silence throughout the remainder of his life, Houston showed restraint that few other heads of households or heads of state would have observed, then or now. His silence is particularly noteworthy in an era when the male was king, and this particular male was the kingliest in his state.

Human nature in the 1820s was not different from

CULVER PICTURES, NEW YORK



Representing Texas in the U.S. Senate from 1846 to 1859, Houston followed his own convictions. Since the senator was a determined opponent of secession, other southerners labeled him a traitor to their cause. In the old engraving above, the "magnificent barbarian" whittles in the Senate to show his disdain for criticism.

human nature in the 1980s. Most of Houston's friends rushed to see who could desert him most quickly. A "howling crowd" burned him in effigy on Gallatin's courthouse lawn. Tennessee buzzed, and the nation quivered with the excitement of a good scandal. The *Richmond* (Virginia) *Inquirer* wrote of "rumors about Gen. Houston . . . too unpleasant . . . to be repeated." *Niles' Register* in Washington was more sympathetic as it lamented his "deeply wounded spirit."

And what of Eliza Allen? None of Houston's more than fifty biographers has probed her feelings. After all, she was a mere eighteen years old, thrown out—in effect—by her governor-husband. But Eliza was no teen-aged slender reed. Like Houston she too could keep silent, and did. The feeling persists that she may have been the one who spurned Houston, rather than the other way around. Houston wrote to his father-in-law after the separation: "I . . . do love Eliza . . . she is the only earthly object dear to me God will bear witness."

After the unexplained break with his wife, Houston resigned as governor and exiled himself to live with the Cherokees again, this time beyond the western end of Arkansas, not far from the kicker grounds of today's Okies from Muskogee. As *Niles' Register* noted at the end of May, 1829, Houston had "caused much surprise among the people." Or as William Carroll, a former supporter turned enemy, observed: "His conduct, to say the least, was very strange and charity requires us to place it to the account of insanity. I have always looked upon him as a man of weak and unsettled mind . . . incapable of manfully meeting a reverse of fortune."

The Cherokees received Houston as a brother, a restless soul who had gone away to the white man's world, who had succeeded by the white man's standards, who had drunk the bitter tea of white perfidy, and who had returned to relatives who asked no questions and demanded no justifications. To them, his broken marriage to Eliza Allen did not matter, for in the Cherokee world a marriage to a white woman was no marriage at all, just a temporary convenience. The Cherokee's basic attitude was similar to

Aging Sam Houston had experienced both enthusiastic acclaim and bitter criticism from his fellow Texans. As victor over the Mexicans at San Jacinto and as first president of the Republic of Texas, Houston demonstrated forcefulness which won devoted followers. When this photograph was taken in 1857, Houston was nearing the end of his years as a U.S. Senator and was suffering abuse from Texas constituents for his unpopular stand against secession.

the whites', which held that a marriage to a red woman (or later, to a Japanese or a Nicaraguan or a Vietnamese) was a convenience to be ignored whenever the Yankee returned to his homeland. As a boy Sam Houston had learned freedom and acceptance from the Cherokees. Now as a man who had lost his compass—a man with no goals, no future, no love, and few friends—he turned to his Indian companions again.

At once Houston found friends. Almost as quickly he found love. He had known Tiana Rogers on that first sojourn—as the ten-year-old, half-naked, half-sister of his closest Cherokee boyhood chums, John and James Rogers. Now she was a tall, graceful "widow" of thirty, somewhat mysterious herself, for no one knew what had become of her first husband, David Gentry. Perhaps he was dead, killed in a fight against the Osage; perhaps the pair had split the blanket. Never mind. She was eligible, and Houston was in no position to ask questions.

In Cherokee society it was a splendid marriage for Houston. Tiana (to use just one of a dozen variations of her name) was the daughter of the Supreme Chief, Ol-loote-ka, who himself was descended in part from a British soldier of the Revolution. And Houston was his adopted son. Tiana's half-brother John would be the next head chief, and her grand-nephew, William Charles Rogers, would become the last chief of the Cherokee nation. Although no official record exists of the marriage, the Cherokees accepted Houston and Tiana as man and wife rather than a temporary liaison.

So Houston married into the inner, upper councils of the Cherokee. He and Tiana set up in a large log house near the Neosho River, planted an apple orchard, and started living in Houston's accustomed good style, entertaining and trading. He began to write articles for the *Arkansas Gazette* over in Little Rock (a fine paper then, a superior one today), inveighing against the systematic defrauding of the Cherokees by the white man. These repeated charges did not endear Houston to Americans along the frontier, many of whom thought he ought to be lynched as a bigamist anyway. Although he signed his articles "Standing Bear," no one doubted Houston's authorship.

When official Washington reached out to demand that Houston comply with requirements that all American traders with Indians be licensed, Houston refused. American laws had no validity where he was concerned, he retorted. He was no longer a citizen of the United States. He was a Cherokee. To extend the law to him would be to enter a wedge whereby a free Cherokee nation might eventually succumb to vassalage. First the attorney general in Washington and then the United States Supreme Court, in a parallel case, declared that Houston's position was untenable.

For a year Houston was a model Indian and husband. Then in 1831 without warning, grief from his troubled life overflowed, and for six months he tried to drink his way to oblivion. He dueled with an employee; he struck his father-in-law and was beaten unconscious by bystanders, only to have the chief bathe and nurse him. The Indians gibed at him. They nicknamed him "Big Drunk." Perhaps it was because he would never drink with them.

And then in September Sam went to the bedside of his dying mother in Tennessee. He left the funeral sober. The Raven was ready to fly again.

THREE MONTHS LATER he was back in the East, an unofficial member of a Cherokee delegation to present grievances to President Jackson. On this trip, in 1831, Congressman William Stanbery of Ohio wrongly accused Houston of having connived with Secretary of War John Eaton at a fraudulent contract for Indian rations. Houston sent Representative Cave Johnson of Tennessee to Stanbery to open negotiations for a duel. When Stanbery retorted that he did not recognize Sam Houston, the Raven announced, "I'll introduce myself to the damned rascal."

Chancing on Stanbery on a Washington street one night, Houston proceeded to cane the congressman about the head. When Stanbery drew a pistol which misfired against

Continued on page 61

PHOTOGRAPH BY MATHEW B. BRADY
THE BETTMANN ARCHIVE, NEW YORK

C. E. WATKINS'
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WHAT PRICE SUCCESS?

THE LIFE AND PHOTOGRAPHY OF CARLETON E. WATKINS

by Peter E. Palmquist

"IF THIS BUSINESS don't give us a living we will go and squat on some government land and raise spuds." The year was 1880, and photographer Carleton E. Watkins was on the road again. Things were not going well. He was feeling lonely and greatly depressed by the apparent bleakness of his financial future.

Watkins was fifty years old when he wrote about raising spuds to his wife Frankie, nearly thirty years his junior. At the time of his letter, Watkins had already been traveling for several months, photographing sites in Arizona Territory and in the newly developing areas of southern California. He had been fighting unseasonably foul weather, poor health, bad food and living conditions, and he was barely one step ahead of his creditors. Frankie, meanwhile, tended their photography business, such as it was, in San Francisco.

Despite his hard luck and loneliness, Watkins tried very hard to bolster Frankie's flagging spirits, but the result was bittersweet: "Keep up your courage. The old man will be home as soon as he can, and we will 'take a walk.' That's poor folks luxury." Today, one can't help but wonder how Carleton and his bride would have felt if they had known that in 1979, fifty-one of "the old man's" photographs would fetch $100,000 in a New York auction.

For more than forty years, Carleton Emmons Watkins (1829–1916), was one of America's most important and influential photographers. Although he performed commercial photography of every kind, he is best remembered for the fine artistry and high technical excellence of his mammoth-sized images of Yosemite taken during the 1860s. Produced on glass-plate negatives as large as eighteen by twenty-two inches, his magnificent images of the High Sierra played an important role in helping society appreciate the natural wonders of the California frontier.

In 1864 for instance, burgeoning public sentiment, formed in large measure by Watkins's powerful landscape photographs, led the United States Congress to declare Yosemite "inviolate." This significant recognition (the first of its kind) paved the way for the eventual establishment of America's national park system. Watkins also became an important ad hoc member of the California State Geological Survey team during the period 1865–67, and again in 1870. His camera provided visual access to many wilderness areas inaccessible to all but the most hardy adventurers. Eventually, Watkins produced superb landscape photographs over a wide geographic region, including Arizona, New Mexico, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington Territory, as well as his adopted home, California.

Much has already been written concerning the heroic and rewarding aspects of photography along the westward moving frontier—about William Henry Jackson's fine accomplishments at Yellowstone, about T. H. O'Sullivan, A. J. Russell, John Hillers, C. R. Savage, and a host of

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others who joined the various exploring expeditions or accompanied the railroads on their inexorable journey to the Pacific. Each of these talented photographers worked and struggled with his craft to produce an effective and lasting documentary record of the opening West. Each, in various ways, suffered hardship and privation as part of the job.

Few landscape photographers, however, gained as much universal acclaim as Carleton Watkins. His images were among the first photographs of the western landscape to be praised as having high artistic value, intrinsically. Even such renowned landscape painters as Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Hill, Virgil Williams, and William Keith appreciated and freely employed Watkins's vision as a continuing source of pictorial inspiration. Over the years Watkins's photographs received many important awards in England, Austria, Chile, as well as numerous commendations at American fairs and expositions held in San Francisco, Cleveland, Philadelphia, New Orleans, and Portland. In 1867, Watkins won a prestigious international award for photographic landscape views at the Paris Exposition. Artistically, he was at the very pinnacle of success. Financially, he could barely meet his everyday expenses.

IN MANY WAYS, Watkins's life and amazing photographic odyssey exemplify pioneer spirit at its best. The eldest of eight children born to an Oneonta, New York, hotelkeeper, twenty-two-year-old Carleton left home in 1851 for excitement and opportunity on the Golden Shore. Like so many others, Watkins tried his hand at various jobs before chance led him into studio photography in 1854. After a San Jose, California, gallery photographer quit without warning, Watkins agreed to "fill-in" until an experienced operator could be found. However, he proved so adept in his new trade that the gallery owner continued his employment. By 1861, Watkins was in business for himself. Unlike most studio owners, however, Watkins gave up the financial security inherent in gallery portraiture in favor of more sporadic opportunities in town and field photography. His first commissions for such work grew out of the many land-fraud cases in California during the late 1850s and early 1860s. Using his large wet-plate camera, he made views of geographic features for use as court evidence in the New Almaden Quicksilver Mine and Peralta land cases.

The use of photography in the courts was then very new, and Watkins was greatly encouraged by his success in this line of work. He soon extended his landscape efforts, making a photographic foray into Yosemite in the late summer of 1861, the first of many such visits. As a result, he came to the attention of the leaders of the California State Geological Survey and subsequently became a valued part of their team. Seemingly, Watkins had found his career niche and was well on his way to achieving his life's goals.

But recently uncovered evidence provides intimate, behind-the-scenes details of many incredible frustrations and hardships which dogged Watkins's financial progress like a nightmare. Insights regarding Watkins's personal and professional life are found in correspondence during the years 1865 to 1874 between Josiah Dwight Whitney, state geologist of California, and William H. Brewer, professor of agriculture at Yale University: "Watkins has been as poor as poverty all winter. He told me today that he had only recd $2.50 in 20 days . . . Bierstadt refused to pay for $600 worth [of Watkins's pictures] that he ordered & received. . . . Watkins is in poor health. I fear that he may not be able to go to the Yosemite after all."

Whitney and Brewer obviously admired Watkins, and they were often incensed over the manner in which he was abused in the marketplace. Brewer to Whitney: "When I visited Philadelphia I found a scoundrel copying Watkins' earlier pictures and selling the reduced copies at two dollars each—I went in and had the satisfaction of expressing myself very freely on the matter—but of course what good does it do—They were Germans, and claimed that as the pictures were not copyrighted 'anyone has a right to copy them' . . . & I left in disgust."

Taking mammoth photographs in such rugged and remote locations as Yosemite was a considerable undertaking. Simply reaching Yosemite posed difficulties during the early 1860s. Watkins had to transport all of his paraphernalia—massive camera and plates, dark-tent, chemicals, and a myriad of related items—on the backs of pack animals. A comment by Whitney gives us a revealing glimpse into the magnitude of this project. "Watkins [is going into Yosemite] with material for a big 'take' there and back —over 2000 Lbs of baggage, glass for over 100 big negatives. . . ."

Watkins's activities while in the valley take on added meaning in an exchange between the two correspondents

Text continues on page 66; pictures continue overleaf.

We cordially invite all to spend a leisure hour or two in examining our collection, and thereby visiting the wonders and beauties of
Yosemite, the Mammoth Groves,
GEYSERS, PACIFIC RAILROAD,
COLUMBIA RIVER,
And all other places of interest on the Pacific Coast.

A Carleton E. Watkins Portfolio

The Golden Gate from Telegraph Hill

Although best remembered today for his photographs of the natural western landscape, Carleton E. Watkins also produced many superb views of the urban scene. The photograph below of Civil War era San Francisco—a detail from one of Watkins's 18" x 22" mammoth plates—looks down Greenwich Street from atop Telegraph Hill. Landmarks to the west include Russian Hill, Black Point, and the entrance to San Francisco Bay. The acute sharpness of an original Watkins mammoth-plate photograph is astonishing, even when compared to today's standards. Some idea of the immensity of his giant images—produced long before photographic enlarging became practical—may be gained when one realizes that the magazine illustration below occupies only about one-third of the area of a Watkins mammoth-size glass negative.

MAMMOTH PLATE

MAMMOTH PLATE

BANCROFT LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

THURLOW LODGE

Watkins also produced some of the finest architectural photography of his era. The picture at left is one of several dozen views he made of Thurlow Lodge, the mansion built by former U. S. senator from California Milton S. Latham. Located on Latham's estate thirty miles south of San Francisco, the building was described as a" marriage of Italianate and Second Empire architecture." Lavish outlays of capital for Thurlow Lodge probably contributed to Latham's eventual bankruptcy.

WHITE FIR, YOSEMITE

MAMMOTH PLATE, 1865 CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, SAN FRANCISCO

Watkins's beautifully composed view of pioneer Yosemite guardian Galen Clark with the Grizzly Giant was made during the photographer's first-ever visit to Yosemite in 1861. Although many of Watkins's large photographs do not include people, Clark's presence here is an essential element in establishing the scale of this immense sequoia with its thirty-three-foot girth. The scene below, one of many photographs of the Yosemite Valley that would help establish Watkins's reputation, was also made during the fall of 1861.

THE GRIZZLY GIANT, MARIPOSA GROVE

MAMMOTH PLATE BANCROFT LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

The photograph on the opposite page is one of a series of Watkins's portraits of trees as botanical specimens. Such images were greatly prized by scientists of the period, including botany professor Asa Gray of Harvard, for whom this series was taken. Besides trees, Watkins documented significant western shrubs as well as many examples of cactus.

VIEW ON THE MERCED

MAMMOTH PLATE BANCROFT LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

FIRST VIEW OF THE YO-SEMITE FROM THE MARIPOSA TRAIL

Watkins's photographs of Yosemite's geologic splendor are magnificent. J. D. Whitney, leader of the California State Geological Survey, felt that this view, and others taken from the rim of the Yosemite Valley during the summer of 1866, were among the finest ever taken by Watkins. In this instance, the camera seems to hang in space with no visible support. Watkins had to surmount great difficulties in transporting his huge camera to sites like this, and his ability to coat, expose, and process the giant glass negatives under trying circumstances was a source of amazement to his competitors.

MAMMOTH PLATE
CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY, SACRAMENTO

CAPE HORN, COLUMBIA RIVER

MAMMOTH PLATE, 1867 OREGON STATE LIBRARY, SALEM

PORT BLAKELEY, PUGET SOUND

BOUDOIR PHOTOGRAPH (APPROX. 5" x 7") SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

In 1882 Watkins made an extensive series of photographs featuring the shipping and harbor facilities of the Pacific Northwest. Also included were historically important scenes documenting the growth and progress of Seattle and Vancouver. In the view of the sawmill town of Port Blakeley (right), note Watkins's dark-tent—in which he prepared his photographic plates—set up in the right foreground. During this trip a spark from a passing locomotive set fire to the tent. The excellent photograph of Cape Horn on the Columbia River (opposite page) dates from an earlier visit by Watkins to the Pacific Northwest. This view duplicates one of fifty-one mammoth-plate images bound into a single volume which in 1979 sold for $100,000 at a New York auction. During Watkins's day, such prints usually sold for $3.50 to $5.00 apiece.

The British iron-hulled ship Viscata *(right) was departing San Francisco Bay for Liverpool when she ran aground near Fort Point on March 7, 1868. Laden with $90,000 worth of wheat, the wreck attracted many visitors from nearby San Francisco. By the time Watkins captured this scene, fast-moving salvagers had already removed the* Viscata's *mainmast. As in the view above, the triangular structure near the right edge of the picture is probably the photographer's dark-tent.*

THE WRECK OF THE VISCATA

MAMMOTH PLATE BANCROFT LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

IMPERIAL PLATES, 1883 CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY, SACRAMENTO

PANORAMA OF MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

Watkins excelled at panoramic imagery and is known to have made panoramas consisting of as many as twenty separate images. The four-part series above shows sleepy Monterey, California, as seen from near the railroad station. The modern photographic prints for this panorama were made from original Watkins glass negatives, of which only a handful survived the devastation of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire. Watkins's traveling wagon may be seen to the right of the train cars (directly above). During the summer months, the wagon was draped in white canvas to lessen the effects of the sun's heat.

PANORAMA OF VIRGINIA CITY FROM THE WATER FLUME

Watkins's Nevada views of the Comstock mining region are among his finest photographs. The 1876 panorama below shows Virginia City and its adjacent mining works—which together formed the most important mining complex in the West—largely rebuilt just a year after a fire leveled much of the town. An enlargement of the third view in the panorama appears on the following two pages. The full impact of an original Watkins mammoth print cannot be fully realized in a reproduction. However, note the profusion of detail visible in this image when it is shown in the larger size. Still, this two-page illustration equals only about half of the original negative area.

MAMMOTH PLATES BANCROFT LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

CITY LIVERY & FEED STABLES

CEREUS GIGANTEUS, ARIZONA

MAMMOTH PLATE, CIRCA 1880 BANCROFT LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

MISSION SAN LUIS REY DE FRANCIA

MAMMOTH PLATE, CIRCA 1880 BANCROFT LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

Watkins produced an important series of views of the California missions, including Mission San Luís Rey de Francia (left), located near present-day Oceanside. By the late nineteenth century the majority of the missions had fallen into disrepair, and Watkins's images show them as monuments to the decline of Spanish influence in California.

Watkins also made a number of photographs documenting the developing railroad system in the West. The scene below, showing Southern Pacific facilities near Yuma, is typical. The photographer enjoyed free transportation on many of the western lines because of a special arrangement with Collis P. Huntington. In return for a lifetime pass and use of a special rail car for living quarters and carrying his wagon and horse, Watkins provided photographic documentation of the rail lines and countryside along the routes.

Another of Watkins's Arizona photographs, on the opposite page, may show the photographer himself in dark hat and coat near the foot of a giant saguaro cactus. Watkins's photographs of the southwest desert country are especially noteworthy in view of the intense heat, blowing dust, and ever-present glare of the sun that provided severe handicaps for wet-plate photography. Characteristically, Watkins was equal to the challenge.

ROUND HOUSE, YUMA

MAMMOTH PLATE, CIRCA 1880 HENRY E. HUNTINGTON LIBRARY AND ART GALLERY, SAN MARINO

THE VANISHING BASQUE

FOR MORE THAN A CENTURY throughout the open-range districts of the American West, to say "sheepherder" was to mean "Basque." Certainly there were exceptions. Mexicans, American Indians, Chinese, Scots, Portuguese, Greeks, Italians, and Anglo Americans have all herded sheep at different times and places. In Lake County, Oregon, the herders were generally Irish; in New Mexico they were Hispanos. Navajo Indians have always tended their own sheep, and in Utah and southeastern Idaho the herder is oftentimes a Mormon. Nevertheless, Basques have constituted the ethnic backbone of the herding vocation since the founding of the region's sheep industry.

The Basques, the *Euskaldunak* in their own language, have long been regarded as Europe's mystery people. Their blood-group frequencies and other serological evidence, coupled with the uniqueness of their language within the panorama of human tongues, have long bewildered scholars. To this day the Basques remain an anthropological enigma, thought by some to be the direct descendants of the Upper Paleolithic population that conceived the Franco-Cantabrian cave paintings at places like Lescaux and Altamira.

The homeland of the Basques is a tiny region (barely one hundred miles across on either an east-west or north-south tangent) which straddles the present French-Spanish frontier at a point where the western ridges of the Pyrenees meet the Cantabrian seacoast. A combination of mountainous terrain, which limited the expansion of agriculture, and an inheritance system, which dictated that the peasant farmstead be transmitted intact in each generation to a single heir, have combined to make the Basque country

MOORHOUSE COLLECTION, UNIVERSITY OF OREGON LIBRARY, EUGENE

one of Europe's oldest seedbeds of candidates for emigration.

Seafaring provided an early and major outlet for the adventurous emigrant. The Basques were Europe's first whalers and, in pursuing their quarry in the North Atlantic, may well have visited the New World prior to Columbus's ventures. Basque mariners played a major role in Europe's voyages of discovery. Men like Elcano, Juan de la Cosa, Legazpi, and Urdañeta extended Iberian influence into uncharted climes. Columbus recruited a large Basque contingent for the crew of his first voyage. In the following century Basque financial interests, vessels, and crews dominated Spain's American run.

For the four centuries of Spanish colonialism in the New World, Basque mercenaries, missionaries, and officials played a key role in the development and administration of the colonies. During this period nearly every Basque village provided some of its sons to "the Indies," and the feedback of men, money, and ideas established what has

Continued on page 59

For over a century until the early 1970s, the lonely occupation of sheepherder in the American West was usually filled by Basques, eager to escape economic deprivation in their native land. Today, however, because of U.S. labor regulations and improved conditions at home, Basques constitute only a small fraction of western herders. The sheepherder on the opposite page, photographed in the Pacific Northwest around the turn of the century, may have been Basque. His modern counterpart below is the last Basque employee of a Nevada ranch that formerly used Basque herders exclusively.

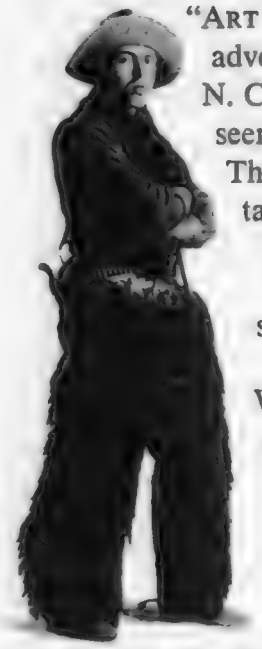
SHEEPHERDER

by William A. Douglass

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN KELLEY

THE AMERICAN WEST OF N. C. WYETH

by James H. Duff



"ART FLOURISHES where there is a sense of adventure," said Alfred North Whitehead. N. C. Wyeth's life, as much as any artist's, seems to prove the philosopher's point. The superb quality of Wyeth's art certainly results from careful observation and a wonderful technique, but just as surely it reflects a spirit that sought and found excitement in almost every experience. Newell Convers Wyeth's enormous energy, inquisitiveness, and love of romance made his life a nearly unceasing series of adventures. The viewer before his paintings, more than the biographer, senses the very real place such adventures have in each work of art.

Wyeth's involvement with the American West was simultaneously an adventure of deeds and of ideas. It resulted in a large number of paintings which represent the West in many forms, in exacting detail, and with great sympathy. Like countless Americans before and since, Wyeth grew up with the imagery of the West and found its romance impossible to ignore. He immersed himself in the life of the West, and made it a major theme in his career. For a while, he gave the West all his attention, and it helped him to become one of the greatest illustrators of all time.

Wyeth grew up in Needham, Massachusetts, where he was born in 1882. His family had maintained New England homesteads since 1645, and a sense of history was a permanent element in formal and informal education. Around the family farm, the countryside was beautiful. Wyeth learned to respect hard work and to ride and care for horses. He did his first drawings there, and his talent convinced his family to arrange an art education.

After attending the Eric Pape School of Art in Boston, after studying with George L. Noyes at Annisquam in 1901 and with Charles W. Reed in 1902, Wyeth decided to make illustration the focus of his artistic career. His youth had given him the experience and perspective to make important art possible: "My brothers and I were brought up on a farm. . . . This early training gave me a vivid appreciation of the part the body plays in action. Now, when I paint a figure on horseback, a man plowing, or a woman buffeted by the wind, I have an acute sense of the muscle strain, the feel of the hickory handle, or the protective bend of head and squint of eye that each pose involves. After painting action scenes I have ached for hours because of having put myself in the other fellow's shoes as I realized him on canvas."

Wyeth's enthusiasm was there from the beginning. But his most important studio lessons and technical development came at the Howard Pyle School of Art in Wilmington, Delaware, and Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania. Howard Pyle was the master. In the "golden age of American illustration," he was the reigning artist whose work was the best in publication and who, as teacher, became known as "the father of modern American illustration."

Text continues on page 56; pictures continue overleaf.

"The Western World of N. C. Wyeth," an exhibition of forty-five Wyeth paintings, will be on display at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center through September 30. The show will later travel to the Coe Kerr Gallery in New York City and the Colorado Historical Society in Denver. The 58-page catalog for the exhibition, with text by James H. Duff and 36 illustrations (6 in color), is available by mail for $12.95 from the Museum Shop, Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Box 1020, Cody, WY 82414.

N. C. WYETH, CIRCA 1904 (ABOVE)

"A WORD OF PRECAUTION TO THE PASSENGERS," CIRCA 1906
COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL COWBOY HALL OF FAME, OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

Navajo Herder in the Foothills

In late 1904 twenty-two-year-old N. C. Wyeth made an extended tour of the American West, including visits to the Navajo country of New Mexico and Arizona. The young artist was fascinated by the Indians. He photographed and sketched them, slept in hogans with them, and made them the subjects of many illustrations. This painting combines great technical achievement with enormous concern for the life and color of the Navajo's world.

Moving Camp

This undated painting reflects Wyeth's interest in the Plains Indian and his lifestyle. The extraordinary color of the work certainly results from careful observation. Coming from the East, Wyeth remarked that "the color in the West is Magnificent and cannot be touched with paint and brush." Nonetheless, he repeatedly attempted to reproduce that color faithfully. Western subjects occupied most of his time from 1904 through 1906, and he continued to produce western illustrations through two decades.

COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON, TEXAS; GIFT OF MR. AND MRS. RALPH E. MULLIN

COLLECTION OF MR. AND MRS. DOUGLAS ALLEN, CENTERVILLE, NEW JERSEY

FIGHT ON THE PLAINS

The Indian is seen differently in this startling painting which captures one side of western romance. The artist was proud of this work, and it appeared as an illustration in a variety of publications with variant captions. But its most famous application was in the 1920 edition of An Autobiography of Buffalo Bill. *It provokes a strong reaction in every viewer, few of whom identify the self-portrait of N. C. Wyeth to the right, behind the barricade of dead animals.*

COLLECTION OF MRS. ANDREW WYETH, CUSHING, MAINE

THE SNOW SHOVELS

In 1906, Outing *magazine published a story by W. M. Raine and W. H. Eader, "How They Opened the Snow Road." It contained four illustrations by N. C. Wyeth. By reproducing all four in full color, the publisher acknowledged the broad public recognition the young illustrator had gained. The realism of* The Snow Shovels *is typical of the four works and probably results from observations made by Wyeth on his trip to Grand County, Colorado, in 1906. During that winter trip, he worked as a fireman on a work train in mountain passes. The mackinaw coat in this painting was purchased by Wyeth at a railroad construction camp and served as a prop for many illustrations. Of* The Snow Shovels, *Wyeth told his family, "I have turned out the best picture I ever painted."*

COLLECTION OF JOHN E. RIEGEL, MONTCHANIN, DELAWARE

SHOOTING THE RAPIDS

Although not obviously western in character, the dramatic and colorful Shooting the Rapids *was largely based on Wyeth's knowledge of western scenes. More than most illustrations, this carefully designed work creates great anticipation in the viewer. Here once again is the mackinaw coat in which Wyeth dressed so many of his central figures.*

COLLECTION OF MISS CAROLYN WYETH, CHADDS FORD, PENNSYLVANIA

THE LOCATING ENGINEER

Wyeth was extremely pleased with the assignment from Scribner's *which led to the painting of the engineer in the mountains. He often referred to this painting and must have thought it an excellent example of his work. The figure was based on an engineer Wyeth met in Colorado, whom he photographed for his future reference and around whom he developed many illustrations.*

WILD BILL HICKOK AT CARDS

The dramatic use of light and shadow obvious in this painting exemplifies a device of which Wyeth was a master. The viewer's attention is focused on Wild Bill Hickok, and no narrative seems necessary to describe the circumstances of the action. That action is frozen at a critical moment, and the selection of that moment was the illustrator's responsibility.

PRIVATE COLLECTION

COLLECTION OF MRS. W. W. ELY, BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS

"WHERE THE MAIL GOES, CREAM OF WHEAT GOES"
COLLECTION OF THE MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA; GIFT OF THE NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY

N. C. WYETH AND

DURING THE FIRST YEARS of this century, the Cream of Wheat Company launched one of the most successful campaigns in the history of American advertising.

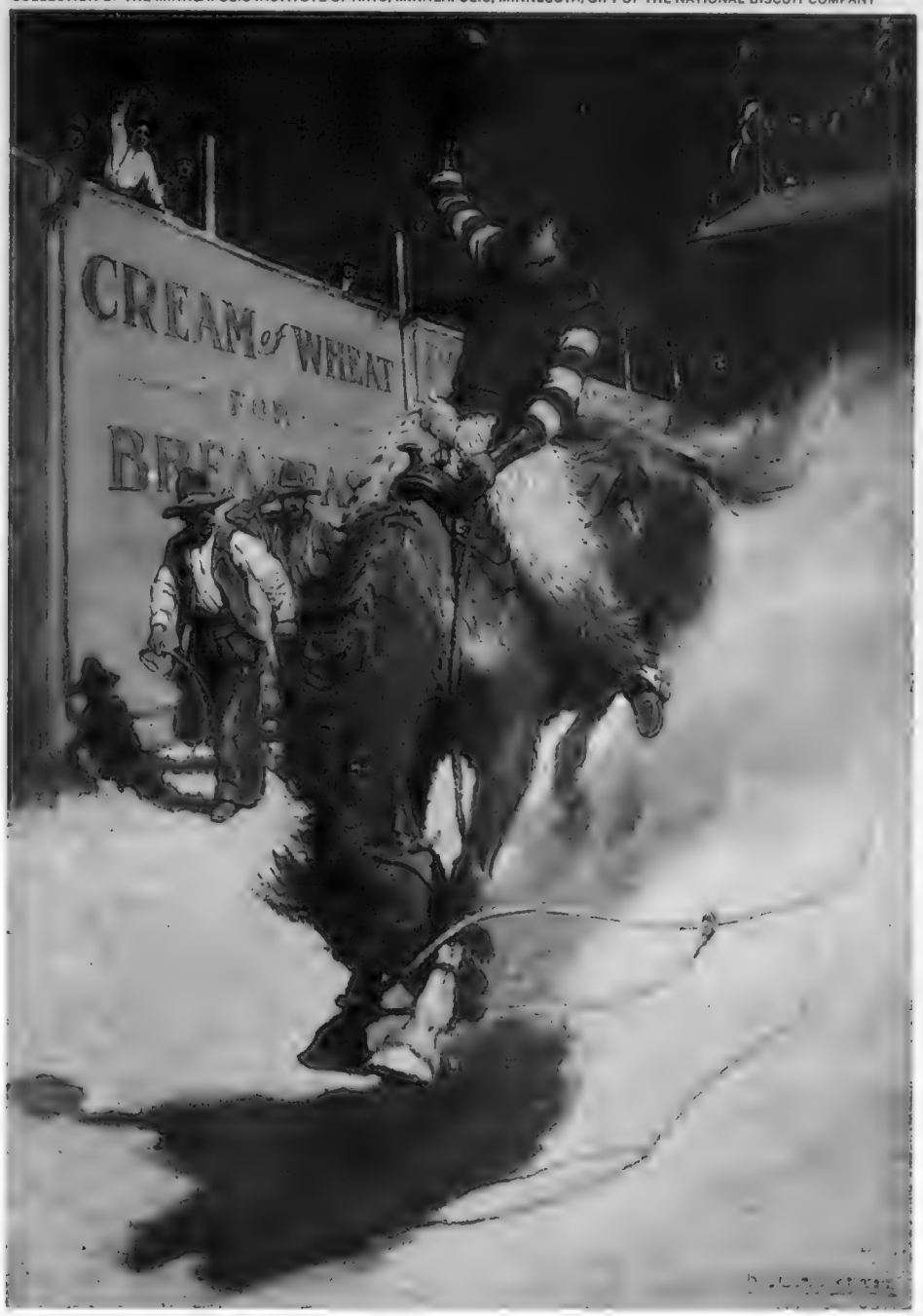
The cereal had come into being much by accident. A small flour mill in Grand Forks, North Dakota (owned and operated by a group of men including one Emery Mapes), was floundering following the panic of 1893. As the business faced ruin, one of the millers volunteered that he had been taking the middlings of the wheat berry home to his wife who made a pleasing breakfast porridge from them. Perhaps the product could be marketed.

The millers prepared ten cases of cereal in handmade cardboard boxes with paper labels stenciled "Cream of Wheat," and shipped them without advance notice with a regular car of flour to the mill's brokers in New York. The brokers telegraphed back: "Forget the flour. Send us a *car* of *Cream of Wheat*." Flour production was halted and the entire plant turned over to the making of the cereal. In 1897, with Cream of Wheat fast becoming an American staple, the firm built bigger and better facilities in the mill city, Minneapolis, where it remains to this day.

The man behind the ads was Emery Mapes. Mapes first began advertising out of North Dakota in 1896, using mostly photographs of sports and country life or poster-like designs in art nouveau style. In 1902 the healthful benefits of eating Cream of Wheat were touted by deftly painted characters from Mother Goose rhymes. But now Mapes was on his way to New York where he could commission the services of celebrated eastern artists. James Montgomery Flagg painted for Cream of Wheat. So did Jessie Willcox Smith and Philip R. Goodwin. But the best of them all, the artist whose Cream of Wheat paintings became classics, was N. C. Wyeth.

Wyeth was fresh out of Howard Pyle's art school and newly returned from the exciting western trip which colored so many of his later illustrations. In November 1906 he wrote with obvious delight

"BRONCO BUSTER"
COLLECTION OF THE MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA; GIFT OF THE NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY



CREAM OF WHEAT

by Patricia Johnston

to his mother: "Mr. Mapes of the Cream of Wheat Co. telegraphed for me to run up and see him at the Waldorf-Astoria. He is the owner of that famous cereal co., and is a man of immense wealth. I have just completed two pictures for him, $250 each, which he is immensely pleased with."

These were *Where the Mail Goes Cream of Wheat Goes*, and *The Bronco Buster*, both boldly drawn and magnificently painted cowboy scenes that rank among the masterpieces of western art. Shortly after Christmas Wyeth wrote that he had "started a whopper of a Cream of Wheat picture . . . 'An Esquimaux Half-Breed' on top of his dog sledge of freight, protecting himself from a pack of wolves, late afternoon on a great frozen lake. Incidentally, there is a case of Cream of Wheat amongst the canned goods and flour." Titled *The Yukon Freighter*, the painting measured a whopping five feet high and three feet wide.

The three paintings, which appeared shortly in all the leading magazines, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's*, *Leslie's*, *Modern Priscilla*, and a host of others, did much to establish young Wyeth's reputation as an illustrator. A decade later, when the artist was riding a well-deserved crest of popularity, the company revived the advertisements, publishing them nationwide a second time.

Mapes's splashy and enormously successful, full-page ads for Cream of Wheat continued through 1926. In all he contracted for more than four hundred original paintings, most of them by nationally known and exceptionally talented painters. But the cream of the Cream of Wheat paintings were the Wyeths.

When the Cream of Wheat company was purchased by Nabisco in the early 1960s, the Wyeth paintings were donated to the Minneapolis Institute of Art where two of them, the western paintings, still hang. *The Yukon Freighter*, sent out to be restored, was destroyed by fire. **AW**

Patricia Condon Johnston *is a freelance writer in Afton, Minnesota.*

A MATTER OF OPINION

PRESERVATION ON A PINNACLE

A Viewpoint by Richard Reinhardt

THE IDEOLOGY of historic preservation has lately reached the high level of public attention that environmental protection attained a decade ago. Everyone professes to be keen on preservation. Hardly anyone speaks against it. (Who could oppose an activity so wholesome, so edifying, so aesthetically satisfying as the salvation of a fine old structure from the wrecker's ball?) Membership in heritage organizations has grown to record numbers. Local governments have set up landmark preservation boards. Town councilors talk earnestly of bonuses and tax incentives for property owners who cherish the old and scorn the new.

It is an uncomfortable spot for an idea to be in, a pinnacle from which there seems to be no route but down. The preservation movement has scarcely arrived and already it is having trouble keeping its balance.

Not long ago in an eastern city, a group of people whom the newspapers called "preservationists" demonstrated the hazards of this position. In defense of an 1831 federal-Greek-revival townhouse, the "preservationists" put in a day of marching, chanting, calling up lawyers, handing out leaflets, and granting interviews to news reporters. The media gobbled it up. The songs and signs and printed T-shirts came across beautifully on the evening news, and the last-minute, Spare-that-Tree phone calls infused the story with elements of high drama. To add to the suspense, the developer brought his crew and crane and weighted pendulum around to the back of the house and smashed the walls to rubble.

After everything was over, one of the demonstrators said he was not discouraged. This was only a skirmish in a war. The point of it, in other words, was not to save the building but to *advance the cause*. This comment, like the incident itself, revealed what has happened to "preservation" since the quiet days when the word usually referred to the efforts of some local history group to buy a pretty little cottage, furnish it with antiques, and turn it into a museum. Preservation has become commercial, institutional, militant, and noisy. It has adopted the familiar style of confrontation politics: publicity, litigation, martyrdom, conflict.

Perhaps it is inevitable that an idea whose time has come should attract not only power but commercial interest. Americans in particular never have been able to resist turning a good idea into a thriving industry. Success has turned the good idea of protecting our historic and architectural heritage into a vested economic interest, with a professional and managerial elite, a specialized press, a literature, and a dependent bloc of artisans, contractors, historians, publishers, writers, designers, public employees, and flaks. The "movement" has erected an institutional structure of agencies and foundations, clubs and businesses. It has built up a thick layer of case law and statutory regulations, and a corps of specialists to administer and interpret them. Now and then, one even hears reports of lawyers who have filed preservationist suits for no apparent reason but to thwart the enemies of their clients and to generate legal fees, a slimy practice that goes by the name of champerty.

It also was inevitable that this timely idea should become politically fashionable. Officials from the Secretary of the Interior on down have embraced the cause of preservation—or at least have picked up its language and symbols to advance their own causes. At the same time, developers and pro-developers have mastered the art of counter-preservationist politics, the technique of blaming preservationists (like environmentalists) for a range of economic problems from unemployment to high-priced housing.

None of this, being unavoidable, should alarm those who are sincerely devoted to the preservation of historically or architecturally significant buildings and neighborhoods. But political interest and commercial exploitation have led to a loss of definition, and that *is* cause for real concern. Popular usage has blurred the meaning of the very word "preservation," mixing it up, for better or worse, with historic re-creations, recycling, museum-keeping, ethnic pride, social planning, and urban aesthetics. In some towns, political factions have used the imperatives of historic preservation as weapons against all sorts of undesirable aspects of modern life—dull architecture, shoddy construction, overburdened municipal services, excessive population density, even crime. In an effort to protect established residential neighborhoods from speculative rebuilding, the city of Berkeley, California, adopted a "Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance" that imposed a virtual moratorium on residential construction. The ordinance clearly had nothing to do with protecting historic sites, yet the "preservation movement" was credited and blamed for its enactment.

Elsewhere, preservation groups have associated themselves primarily with the recycling of old buildings to new uses—the remodeling of breweries into offices or shoe factories into shopping centers. This sort of architectural conversion has many merits. It can bring renewed life to structures and neighborhoods built with substantial, richly textured materials, fine craftsmanship, and sound design. But conversion, strictly speaking, is not historic preservation. It is architectural syncretism. The arguments for and against it are aesthetic and economic, not historical. Confusing it with historic preservation further blurs the meaning of the words.

Continued on page 55

Important American Art

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INDIAN MARKET
August 16 and 17
featuring Doug Hyde, Nez Perce sculptor
and Priscilla Hoback, potter

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GRACE HUDSON / 1865-1937 **View From the Back** 1898 oil 6½" x 4¾"

WESTERN HISTORY TODAY

Butch Cassidy's Sister. The younger sister of western outlaw Butch Cassidy, Mrs. Lula Parker Betenson, died recently in Circleville, Utah. In 1975, Mrs. Betenson coauthored with Dora Flack *Butch Cassidy, My Brother*, defending Cassidy as a kind man who had been defamed by exaggerated accounts of his life. Mrs. Betenson refuted the report that Butch and the Sundance Kid were killed in South America in 1909. She related details of her brother's life until his death in 1937. For a selection from Betenson's book, see *The American West* for May, 1975.

Sacagawea on Venus. Geological features revealed on Venus by the Pioneer radar-mapper in orbit around the planet are being named for goddesses or famous women no longer living, officials at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration recently announced. One feature is to be named for Sacagawea, the controversial Shoshoni woman who accompanied the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Medicine Show. Frontier medicine is the theme of an exhibit at The Oakland Museum through August 3. Documenting medical practice in northern California from the gold rush to World War I, the old-time medicine show features early surgical instruments, newspaper accounts of prevalent diseases, bottles of patent medicine, pill-rolling machines, and other paraphernalia.

Remington Painting. Considered by many experts to be Frederic Remington's finest painting, *Downing the Nigh Leader* is on display at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center through the summer season. This is the first public showing of the 30″ x 50″ masterpiece since it was painted in 1907. The subject is a dramatic Indian attack on a stagecoach, caught at a crucial moment when the left leader of the six-horse team is being felled by the attackers' arrows. Last fall an anonymous buyer acquired *Downing the Nigh Leader* for the largest sum ever paid for a western painting.

Apollo Artifacts. Officers of the Federal Reserve Bank in San Francisco have donated artifacts from the gold-rush ship *Apollo* to the National Maritime Museum. After arriving in San Francisco harbor in 1849, the ship became a floating saloon. The years left it high and dry as the waterfront was filled in, and the *Apollo* finally became completely buried. In 1925 construction workers came upon the stern of the vessel below the rear of the bank, retrieving artifacts (including the log and charts of the ship's last voyage) now donated to the museum. Since the bank plans to vacate its building in two or three years, archaeologists hope that any new construction will provide an opportunity to retrieve the almost-intact *Apollo* buried there.

Archaeological Discovery. Testifying to a massacre in the fourteenth century, the skeletal remains of almost five hundred people have recently been uncovered in an old Indian village along Crow Creek near Vermillion, South Dakota. Archaeologists from the University of South Dakota speculate that the victims had migrated from the central plains of Kansas and Nebraska to escape a serious drought, and perished in tribal rivalries over hunting and agricultural lands.

History Workshop. A new Summer Program in Local History will be offered in late July and early August at the University of California, Santa Barbara, cosponsored by the University and the California Historical Society. A workshop and seminars will consider local history and the community, family history and genealogy, and oral history. For information, write to the Department of History, University of California, Santa Barbara 93106.

Hopi Pottery. The Heard Museum in Phoenix plans an exhibit of historic Hopi pottery art in September, in conjunction with the Pueblo Indian Tri-Centennial Celebration. This commemorates the first successful revolt of the Pueblos against European colonial rule.

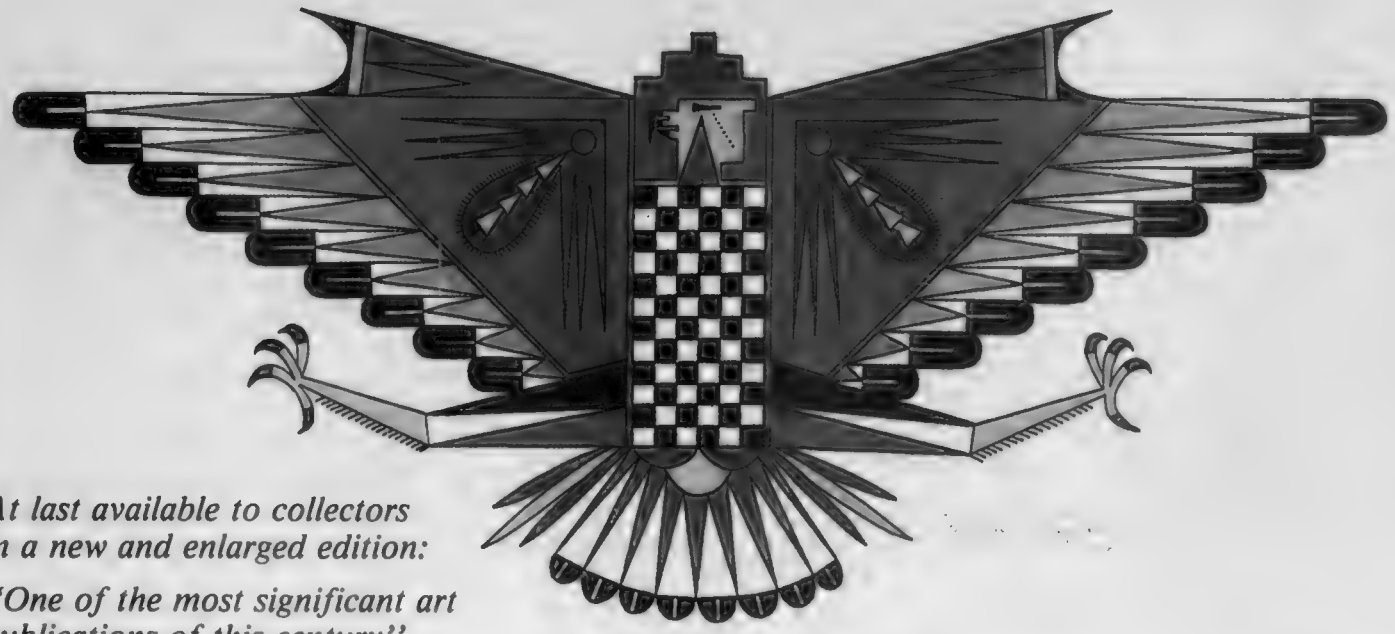
Borglum Statue Destroyed. A recent earthquake in California destroyed a well-known statue by Solon Borglum, famous western sculptor of the early twentieth century. Created for the San Francisco Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915, "The Pioneer" was later given to Tulare county, where it became a popular favorite in Mooney Grove Park.

Mormon Document. A recent discovery has unearthed what is thought to be the oldest existing Mormon document and the earliest extant example of the handwriting of Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon church. Between the pages of an old Bible once owned by Smith's sister, a Utah State University student has found a sheet dating from 1828 and containing columns of characters thought to have been copied by Smith from the golden plates which he said an angel had given to him. Mormons believe that the plates, written in "reformed Egyptian," related the story of a European people who migrated to America centuries before Christ.

Sioux Rejects Hanta Yo. Claiming that a proposed TV series based on the best-selling book *Hanta Yo: An American Saga* presents a fictitious and defamatory narrative of Sioux Indian life from 1750–1834, a South Dakota Oglala Sioux recently sued to stop production of the series. Named in addition to the TV producers are the author, Ruth Beebe Hill, and her collaborator, Chunksa Yuha. *The American West*'s reviewer Jack Burrows expressed his disagreement with Hill's portrayal of Sioux life in our July/August, 1979, issue.

Photo Seminar. A two-day seminar on Preservation of Photographs will be offered at the University of California, Santa Cruz, on August 1–2. Instructors will be Jane and Larry Booth, well-known photographers and museum curators from San Diego. For information, contact the University's Extension Division in Santa Cruz 95064.

Continued on page 54



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THE AMERICAN WEST REVIEW

BUFFALO BILL: HIS FAMILY, FRIENDS, FAME, FAILURES, AND FORTUNES

Reviewed by Don Russell

Buffalo Bill: His Family, Friends, Fame, Failures, and Fortunes *by Nellie Snyder Yost (Swallow Press, 1979; 510 pp., intro., illus., biblio., notes, index, $17.50).*

HOLY WRIT tells us that a prophet is not without honor but in his own country and among his own kin and in his own house. Nellie Yost finds this not entirely the case with Col. William F. Cody in his home town of North Platte, Nebraska, and in his own house known as Scout's Rest Ranch. She does not maintain that a disparaging word was never heard in North Platte; in fact she quotes quite a few, but much comment is favorable, even laudatory, and many people still live there, including the author, who as children saw and heard Buffalo Bill in his own country.

North Platte was Cody's home for some four decades; however, he was not home much. In earlier years he toured in stage melodramas some nine months a year; later, Buffalo Bill's Wild West traveled wherever an outdoor show could be given. Whether his time off came when the Wild West was in winter quarters, or during summer when theatres were hot, dark, and decades away from air conditioning, he was apt to be leading hunting parties, promoting patent medicines or substitute coffee, or looking after his interests in an Arizona gold mine or town building in Cody, Wyoming.

This biography covers all of Cody's career, but the emphasis is on home and family, a part of his life that has received little informed attention. One finding is that the disagreements between Cody and his wife were not so long lasting or so serious as has been assumed, despite an inconclusive divorce action.

The Codys of course were "society" in North Platte, and newspapers reported dancing and euchre parties, many of them hosted by Miss Arta, the eldest daughter. These were not such Cody extravagances as might appear, for large parties were given by less-than-wealthy families in those days of big houses and low prices. Before movies, radio, and television, most amusement was self-contrived, and the Codys were hospitable. High spots for North Platte came when Buffalo Bill's Wild West played his home town, which it did on only a few occasions, for his show made few cross-country tours.

One of Cody's charms was his kindness to children. It is said that when youngsters were caught trying to crawl under the show's tents, they were marched to the front entrance and passed in to see the show. When theatrical companies came to North Platte—not an every night event—Cody often paid the way of hordes of children who hung around the box office. His tips to bootblacks and to boys who held his horse were always generous.

Anyone who exploits his own heroic career is looked upon with suspicion, and Cody has suffered from literary debunkers, as well as from jealous rivals in scouting and show business. Although he was no boaster, he made little effort to set the record straight when exaggerated versions of his deeds were circulated. The first book about him was an autobiography published in 1879, when he was still on the stage, with minimum press agentry, and presumably he was responsible for its content. However, it was condensed, expanded, and rehashed in several later autobiographical works of less reliability. There were also biographies made to be sold at the showgrounds, including one by his sister Helen Wetmore, all of which were more laudatory than factual.

Then there were dime novels, running to near 2,000 issues, including reprints, presented to youthful and uncritical readers as factual; for example, one series advertised, "In no manner can you become so thoroughly acquainted with this great man, as by reading the New Buffalo Bill Weekly." The intrusion of occasional facts in the estimated 557 stories helped to confuse public opinion on William F. Cody.

Since Cody's death several biographers have waded through this mass of material, picking and choosing items here and there to come up with a new version. I counted 266 errors in one of those books, and there probably were more I was not sure of. Mrs. Yost's book is not in that category. She has done a lot of digging in source material that helps to make us really "acquainted with this great man."

Buffalo Bill is perhaps the most typical individual in the Westward Movement, but publicity and exaggeration have made his personality elusive. Unfortunately the more you read, the more complicated this apparently simple character appears. Few have enjoyed popularity and acclaim over so long a period with so little disparagement despite the many blunders and failures that are recorded. Obviously Cody falls short of real greatness, yet few have been more influential. Much of the romance we attach to the frontier West derives from Buffalo Bill, accumulating through his career as scout (which is almost completely documented), the world travels of his Wild West Show, the autobiographies, the biographies, the dime novels, and the universal acceptance that the very name of Buffalo Bill conjures up an era of heroic achievement.

Mrs. Yost has not entirely succeeded in penetrating to the real Buffalo Bill, but perhaps she has come close. There is a wealth of new material on his family, his friends, and Cody, himself. Few of the numerous books about him have contributed as much. **AW**

Don Russell is author of The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill (1960) *and* The Wild West Shows (1970).

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People of the Totem: The Indians of the Pacific Northwest *by Norman Bancroft-Hunt and Werner Forman (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1979; 128 pp., illus., biblio., index, $14.95).*

In this beautiful, over-size volume, the authors describe the unusual customs and art work of the Indians who inhabit a narrow coastal strip of western North America from Washington state to southeastern Alaska. Over 130 striking photographs in full color show in detail the unusual objects crafted for ceremonial use or for everyday living.

The Grand Canyon: Up Close & Personal *edited by Robert C. Euler and Frank Tikalsky (Western Montana College Foundation, Dillon, Montana, 1980; 88 pp., illus., biblio., $7.25 plus 55¢ for mailing).*

Packed into this slight volume are beautiful colored photographs and descriptive information from scholars who know the Grand Canyon intimately. Experts in river running and hiking, geology, biology, anthropology, and history offer personal celebrations of the Canyon in accurate, readable, and up-to-date observations. Helpful selected reading lists are included.

The Geysers of Yellowstone *by T. Scott Bryan (Colorado Associated University Press, Boulder, 1979; 225 pp., illus., glossary, appen., biblio., index, paper $6.95, cloth $15.00).*

The author describes in detail each of the more than three hundred geysers in the Park, with accompanying maps. Designed as a field guide for the Park visitor, the volume also serves as an introduction to the nature of geyser activity, including other geyser areas of the world.

Pueblo Indian Painting, *introd. by Jamake Highwater (Bell Editions, New York/Santa Fe, 1979; distributed by Folio, Inc., Box 1943, Scottsdale, Arizona 85252; 26 pp. text, 50 full-page, color reproductions, $500).*

This magnificent portfolio (20" x 16") offers fifty, full-color reproductions of watercolor paintings by nine Indian artists of the New Mexican Pueblos of San Ildefonso and Sia, completed during the years 1900 to 1930. The present limited edition is an exact reproduction of a rare 1932 work published in Nice, France, by C. Szwedzicki. Reflecting Pueblo devotion to the world of nature, the brightly colored paintings are predominantly religious, depicting ceremonies in which masked figures represent the powers of nature.

A Concise Dictionary of Indian Tribes of North America *by Barbara A. Leitch (Reference Publications, Inc., Algonac, Michigan, 1979; 646 pp., illus., maps, biblio., glossary, index, $59.95).*

This useful reference work not only provides a concise profile of each tribe but conveys an overview of North American Indians. Combined with a wealth of factual material is attention to human dimension which provides understanding of Indians as people.

Ghost Towns of the Santa Cruz Mountains *by John V. Young (Paper Vision Press, Santa Cruz, California, 1979; 156 pp., illus., map, $8.95).*

In the nineteenth century, the Santa Cruz Mountains (south of California's San Francisco peninsula) were alive with logging camps, railroad towns, and farming communities. New roads brought about the disappearance of most of those settlements. This slight volume tells the lively story of the Santa Cruz settlements during their most boisterous time and of the colorful people who lived there.

George Fiske: Yosemite Photographer *by Paul Hickman and Terence Pitts (Northland Press, Flagstaff, Arizona, 1980; 118 pp., illus., notes, biblio., index, $20.00).*

Dramatic pictures of Yosemite in the 1870s and 1880s taken by George Fiske (1835–1918) are reproduced as duotones in this fine large-format volume. As a resident photographer, Fiske pursued "the transitory as well as the monumental aspects of the park." **AW**

The Basques . . . . old world and new

Beltran: Basque Sheepman of the American West

by Beltran Paris, as told to William A. Douglass

As a youth raised on a tiny farm in the Pyrenees mountains of France, Beltran Paris lived a life of almost unceasing work and few expectations. As he was to recall in later years, "Somehow, I thought I could do better." It was this motivation that prompted him to join the many hundreds of young Basques in similar straits who made the momentous decision to emigrate to the American West. His experiences typified the Basque sheepherder early in this century, but Beltran was not satisfied to remain a sheepherder or a camptender. Eventually he built a successful livestock operation which today extends over three Nevada counties. ***$10.00***

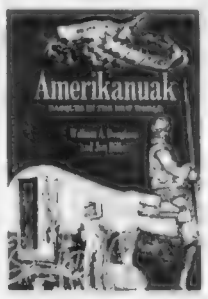
The Basques: The Franco Years and Beyond

by Robert P. Clark

The first in-depth English-language account of the violence-fraught struggle for Basque nationalism under the oppressive regime of Spanish dictator Francisco Franco. Political scientist Robert P. Clark writes with the advantage of "a near unique window" into the lives of the people who populate the nationalist movement. Describing the origins of the ETA terrorists, Clark says that the violence of the Franco era "bred a generation of revolutionary Basque youth whose commitment to the life of the gun cannot be switched off as one would a lamp." The book explores the Basques' long struggle to preserve their unique language and heritage. ***$17.50***

Amerikanuak: Basques in the New World

by William A. Douglass and Jon Bilbao



The monumental saga of seafaring Basques who led the way to the New World in their pursuit of whales across uncharted oceans; of Christopher Columbus's first expedition, which was dependent upon Basque ships and sailors; and of colonists who formed a dramatic part of the history of South America, Mexico, and the American West. ***$16.00***

In A Hundred Graves: A Basque Portrait

by Robert Laxalt

A unique internal view of the people who inhabit a Basque village in France. As an American born of Basque parents, the author draws the reader along with him into the rarely seen inner life of the village. Shepherds, smugglers, troubadors, and a town crier are all seen in the various situations which make up the panorama of village folk. By the author of *Sweet Promised Land.* ***$6.00***

A Book of the Basques

by Rodney Gallop

This classic work on the Basques, first published in England in 1930, remains the only comprehensive study in English of the customs and traditions of the mysterious race that inhabits the Pyrenees mountains and seacoasts between France and Spain. ***$7.00***

Basque Nationalism

by Stanley G. Payne

Internationally noted historian Stanley G. Payne presents a vivid account of Basque nationalism from its earliest beginnings through the dramatic struggle during the Spanish Civil War. A concluding chapter brings the story up to the present as Payne explores the many nuances, contradictory trends, and diverse opinions within the ranks of the Basque nationalists themselves. ***$9.50***

To be released this Spring

The Witches' Advocate: Basque Witchcraft and the Spanish Inquisition (1609-1614)

by Gustav Henningsen

Early in the seventeenth century the Spanish Inquisition was faced with an "outbreak" of witchcraft accusations in the Basque region. The Tribunal of Logroño sent one of its three inquisitors on a journey of visitation to investigate the charges, with the result that many persons were detained and tried, and some were executed. A later visitation by inquisitor Alonso de Salazar, however, led to doubts about the validity of the many confessions heard earlier, and he filed a report which resulted in termination of the Inquisition's proceedings. An important book for any student of witchcraft, the Inquisition, or the Spanish Renaissance. ***$24.00***

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WESTERN BOOK REVIEWS

Those Tremendous Mountains: The Story of the Lewis and Clark Expedition *by David Freeman Hawke (Norton, New York, 1980; 289 pp., illus., biblio., index, $12.95).*

Reviewed by Mary Lee Spence

THIS IS a popular account of America's great military and scientific exploring expedition—that of Lewis and Clark from Saint Louis to the Pacific and back in the years 1804–6. It is based on the sound scholarship of others, among them Reuben Gold Thwaites, Bernard DeVoto, Donald Jackson, Paul R. Cutright, and John L. Allen.

Hawke's style is lively, the narrative flows smoothly, and he carefully interweaves into the text vivid quotations from the journals with spelling, capitalization, and punctuation unfortunately scrubbed up to conform to modern usage. Forty-three reproductions grace the volume. Some are drawings by William Clark, others are engravings of animals and plants by scientists. A few are paintings by Charles Willson Peale who preserved in his museum the skins and skeletons—and for a time some of the live animals—sent back from Fort Mandan. Many are watercolors of buffalo, Mandans, and Blackfeet which Karl Bodmer and Jacob Alfred Miller painted more than thirty years after Congress had rewarded the successful voyagers with double pay and grants of land. The text is unencumbered by citations and footnotes, not always to the liking of this reviewer who wished to know the name of the nineteenth-century traveler who so charmingly described a prairie dog village, for example.

The expedition was very much President Jefferson's, and the author shows how the captains carried out his elaborate instructions directing Lewis to search for a transcontinental water route; map the country and river courses; assess the potential of the land for furs, farming, and military forts; report on plants, animal life, and the weather; and treat diplomatically with the Indians while collecting information about their numbers, languages, culture, and economy. Simultaneously, he captures the interaction of men with each other and with the beautiful and savage wilderness. In a sense the book may be considered a study in challenge, adaptation, and endurance.

"Those Tremendous Mountains" refers to the Rockies, and once through them, the remainder of the westbound trip, so the author maintains, was an anticlimactic race to the ocean. So, too, is the rest of the journey for Hawke, who gives only a cursory summary of the soggy stay at Fort Clatsop and the adventures of the homeward travelers—a weakness of the book. He notes that Lewis and Clark discovered 24 Indian tribes, 178 plants, and 122 animals then unknown to the world, and accepts Lewis's death in 1809 as suicide. While this volume adds little that is new to our knowledge of the captains' incredible achievement, the layman will find it interesting and human. **AW**

Mary Lee Spence teaches history at the University of Illinois and is coeditor of The Expeditions of John Charles Frémont.

Puget's Sound: A Narrative of Early Tacoma and the Southern Sound *by Murray Morgan (University of Washington, Seattle, 1980; 370 pp., illus., maps, notes, index, $12.95).*

Reviewed by Edwin R. Bingham

IN THIS, the latest in his string of studies of the northwest corner of America, Murray Morgan provides a generally impressive narrative of his hometown. Morgan writes in the best tradition of western regional history, keeping company with such writers as Bernard DeVoto, David Lavender, and the author's own neighbor and friend Norman Clark.

The book opens with a refreshing ac-

count of George Vancouver's probing of Puget's Sound in 1792; it closes with Morgan's birth in 1916 and with the gift of land necessary to secure for Tacoma a lasting and lucrative link to the United States military in the form of Fort Lewis. In between, Morgan unfolds Tacoma's story from the Hudson's Bay Company's trading post at Nisqually, the visit of Lieutenant Charles Wilkes's United States Exploring Expedition, and the coming of the first American settlers; through the drawn-out territorial period with its Indian war, the arrival of the Northern Pacific, the anti-Chinese demonstrations, and other assorted growing pains of a city that never quite realized its ambitions; down to the Seattle and Tacoma contingents of General Jacob Coxey's "Commonweal Army of Christ" and the "municipal socialism" of Tacoma Water and Light Company.

The author's method is biographical and anecdotal. Leading figures like Governor Isaac Ingalls Stevens, Leschi of the Nisqually, Morton Matthew McCarver, Charles Wright, the Bennett brothers, Sidney and Nelson, and Frank "Jumbo" Cantwell are brought vividly to life. Morgan's constitutional irreverence and ironic detachment prevent lapses into sentimentality. Feminists will be pleased with Morgan's attention to Charlotta Cantwell's plucky succoring of ragged Coxeyites in Great Falls, Montana, but they will be disappointed in his dismissal of Emma Smith DeVoe, Tacoma's leading suffragist, in a single sentence.

The book is unencumbered by footnotes, but Morgan gives gracious acknowledgment of his debts to informants and attaches an enlightening section of notes on sources that indicates how thoroughly he did his homework. A rich vein of historical photographs about a third of the way through the volume adds a welcome dimension.

It is not clear why Murray Morgan felt compelled to carry the narrative into the twentieth century. This chapter preceding his brief coda is less than token. Still, most of *Puget's Sound* is both entertaining and instructive. This personal, somewhat idiosyncratic but on the whole reliable portrait of Tacoma is well worth its moderate price. Place it on your shelf alongside Roger Sales's interpretation of Seattle and Kimbark McColl's volumes on Portland. **AW**

Edwin R. Bingham is professor of cultural American and western history, University of Oregon. He is coeditor of Northwest Perspectives: Essays on the Culture of the Pacific Northwest (1979).

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In this extraordinary book a young Blackfoot woman records the ancient ways of the women of her tribe, the Blood People. Beverly Hungry Wolf recounts personal history, tribal history, legends, and myths in a hauntingly beautiful tribute to her people. She describes the domestic practices of everyday Indian life, such as how to cure meat, sew a tipi, and tan a hide, and shares the traditional lore she has learned from her tribal "grandmothers." A unique revelation of the role of women in Native American culture, her book is "strange and tantalizing...a valuable compendium."—*Kirkus Reviews*

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Sacagawea of the Lewis and Clark Expedition

Ella E. Clark and Margot Edmonds

The legend—often embroidered in fiction—tells of Sacagawea the guide showing Lewis and Clark the way to the distant Pacific. In fact, the young Indian woman who accompanied the expedition did not serve as a guide. In this carefully researched historical account the authors separate the facts from the extensive legends and fictionalization surrounding Sacagawea. They provide a readable, credible account of one of history's most intriguing women. "An important piece of historical detection." —*Publishers Weekly*
$10.95

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University of California Press
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WESTERN HISTORY TODAY

(Continued from page 46)

Kansas Photographs. The Kansas State Historical Society in Topeka has received a gift of over eleven hundred glass negatives picturing life in early twentieth-century Kansas, donated by the photographer, L. W. Halbe. Taken between 1908 and 1912, these pictures are considered important social history documents, providing visual images typical of life in small towns throughout Kansas and the Midwest. The Society makes these pictures available for display, publication, and research.

Largest Log Cabin. The "World's Largest Log Cabin" (the Forestry Building at the Lewis and Clark Exposition of 1905) is one of the special summer exhibits open through August 29 at the Georgia-Pacific Historical Museum in Portland, Oregon. In September the Museum will exhibit "A Gift to the Street," a patternbook of Victorian architecture.

Toltec Mounds. An exciting opportunity to observe archaeological excavation is offered visitors at the newly opened Toltec Mounds State Park near Scott, Arkansas. This large and complex prehistoric settlement was built by ancestors of the American Indian and abandoned before the first European settlers arrived in Arkansas. (Its name is a misnomer, given to the site over a century ago by observers who thought the mounds had been built by the Toltecs of Mexico.) In addition to a large center displaying interpretive exhibits, the park offers the opportunity to observe through large windows the lab work being done on artifacts and to watch actual excavation from an elevated boardwalk. For information, write to the superintendent, Toltec Mounds State Park, Route 1, Box 154A, England, Arkansas 72046.

Old Omaha. The Western Heritage Museum of Omaha, Nebraska, is presenting a historical interpretation of its city in "Omaha: Then and Now, II" from June 6 to September 7. Featured are photographs taken by Louis R. Bostwick (1868–1943) and Larry S. Ferguson, artist-in-residence at the museum. The Bostwick photographs will be selected from the Bostwick-Frohardt Collection of Historical Photography owned by KMTV and on permanent loan to Western Heritage Museum. **AW**

"There is a tendency among western writers to speak of the cowboy in the past tense, as though he had passed from the scene or had become nothing but a fading symbol of the Old West. That isn't true. . .

Panhandle Cowboy

By JOHN R. ERICKSON

Foreword by LARRY MCMURTRY
Photographs by BILL ELLZEY

. . . What has happened is that very few modern writers have had the inclination or the skills to become working cowboys. I had both, and my book is about my four years as a cowboy and manager on a ranch in the Oklahoma Panhandle."

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Edited by MILO MILTON QAUIFE

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xxiv, 462 pages • illustrated • Paper $7.50/Cloth $22.50

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A MATTER OF OPINION

(Continued from page 44)

Why this insistence upon a clear distinction between "preservation" and other forms of community architectural control? Because the criteria for preservation —that is, historical and architectural significance—are as slippery as tadpoles and equally likely to turn into toads. Thoughtfully defined and consistently applied, such standards can become the physical substance of a community; loosely or capriciously used, they can be irritating and oppressive, an excuse for imposing the taste of one group upon the property of someone else. The lack of valid standards shows up when self-styled preservationists fight to protect structures that are merely old, peculiar, or locally prominent. These noisy efforts to protect things that the rest of the community does not value smack of dilettantism. They cause resentment and undermine the whole, splendid idea of historic preservation, which is to enrich the life of the community with the beauty and fullness and variety of its own past.

Not long ago, Michael Kammen, professor of American history and culture at Cornell University, wrote that one of the enduring values of the study of history is to teach us "to avoid the tendency to ascribe equal values to all relationships and events." "Worse than no memory at all," Professor Kammen wrote, "is the undiscriminating memory that cannot differentiate between important and inconsequential experiences. It is the historian's vocation to provide society with a discriminating memory."

One might similarly argue that it is the vocation of the historic preservationist to apply a discriminating memory to the physical relics of the past. Without discrimination, all existing things are equally precious; and, by implication, all proposed changes are equally obnoxious.

The first job of an effective preservationist is to develop his own "discriminating memory," and the next is to educate his community to apply such a memory to itself. Failing to perform these functions, he should not be surprised if the community does not appreciate the value of its own heritage.

In western America the problem of defining historical values is particularly difficult. The westerly migration of white settlers in the nineteenth century swept away many of the physical evidences of pre-European culture, and the landmarks of the movable frontier were by nature insubstantial. Frontier life left powerful images but few monuments. In many places, memory is not yet long enough to be discriminating.

Considering these natural confusions, preservationists would be wise to avoid being arbitrary or self-righteous. Most people see historic preservation as an option, not an obligation. Preservationists must demonstrate that history, and the sense of one's place in history, will enrich the community, not overwhelm it. **AW**

Richard Reinhardt has written widely on the history and politics of western America. His latest book, San Francisco As It Is, As It Was *(co-authored with the late Paul C. Johnson), is a pictorial essay on continuity and disruption in the fabric of a city. Mr. Reinhardt is a member of the board of directors of the Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage.*

AMERICAN WEST OF N. C. WYETH

(Continued from page 32)

Pyle's fame and inspirational teaching attracted students who would be America's finest illustrators for decades thereafter. He restricted his classes to a handful of exceptional aspirants, demanding of them imagination even before artistic ability. A number of Pyle's protégés became famous for paintings and illustrations of the West in fact and fiction. The best known of these are Harvey Dunn, Philip R. Goodwin, Gayle Hoskins, Frank E. Schoonover, Allen Tupper True, and N. C. Wyeth. Young Wyeth arrived in Wilmington to study with Pyle in 1902 and was immediately welcomed as a special talent. By this time, Wyeth was comfortable with a variety of media and had developed a great deal of self-discipline. He displayed an especially fine visual memory and was able to portray emotion in his drawings and to suggest both strength and motion in his figures. The professional approach that Pyle offered was precisely the formal element necessary to bring forth excellent painting. And in Pyle's own art, always before him, Wyeth had the best possible example for a young illustrator.

N. C. knew the West as any American student of his day knew it. He was familiar with the images of Catlin, Remington, and others, and was no stranger to stagecoaches, Indians, cowboys, or cattle drives, regardless of his geographical distance from them. The literature of the day provided a wealth of information and gave a strong, active imagination ideas for drawings and paintings. Some of Wyeth's earliest subjects for Pyle's classes were western, and it was not long after arriving in Wilmington that he sold a painting of a bronco buster to the Curtis Publishing Company. Still a student, N. C. Wyeth suddenly had his work on the cover of the nationally distributed and important *Saturday Evening Post*.

However, student days were not over, and despite an increasing number of commissions from important publishers, N. C. was to spend years under Pyle's direct influence. During this period, he worked with earnest concentration on basic disciplines. He painted with models for endless hours, he visited important galleries and significant exhibitions, and he roamed the countryside (particularly around Chadds Ford), to exercise his love of nature. He was a robust man, strong and energetic with a massive physical appearance. His sense of humor was well known. His activities in this period reveal an extremely well-rounded individual, aware of both the history and the world around him, aware of both his own art and the artistic world which developed in the first years of this century.

UNTIL late 1904, N. C. Wyeth painted a western America he had not seen. This practice contradicted one of Howard Pyle's most important precepts: the artist should know his subject as intimately as possible. By August of 1904 Wyeth began to think about traveling west, largely because at that time *The Saturday Evening Post* asked him to illustrate a western story. He prepared himself for the trip by studying Indian customs, because he intended to live among Indians for a time.

It was not until September of 1904, that the twenty-two-year-old artist left for the West by train. His first destination was Denver, where the family of classmate Allen Tupper True lived. Joseph Chapin, art editor at *Scribner's*, arranged transportation, and the True family provided room and board, a base for further travels, and encouragement. Chapin expected that *Scribner's* would be repaid with material for publication. The True's hospitality was for its own sake, a friendly gesture toward their son's classmate. It was hospitality, N. C. said, "an easterner can't understand until he has really experienced it."

To his mother on September 29, 1904, N. C. wrote, "Here I am in the *great West*, and I'll tell you it *is* the great West." Immediate enthusiasm was his response to the precise images he had been seeking. That first letter from Denver goes on: "Once looking ahead from the car window I made out a cloud of white alkali dust; of course I thought it was some windstorm or possibly a stampede of cattle, but soon a black speck appeared and upon coming nearer it proved to be an old stage coming across country. It set me wild! The old driver up in the box with his high sombrero, a long bullwhip in his hand, blue shirt and vest, white kerchief around his neck, high-topped boots and all literally covered with this white dust. These things continually appeared, thus keeping me in a frenzy of excited expectation."

In that "frenzy of excited expectation" there may have been youthful naiveté, but there was also the requisite keen perception of the artist. Wyeth's letters testify again and again to his observation of details and his memory for those details. It was on such memories and on the knowledge he quickly gained of western customs, that he was to base decades of illustrations.

After being in Colorado for only a few hours, Wyeth was willing to render opinions of importance. "I am gratified to think that my conceptions of the West were about right. In fact I feel perfectly at home here." Confidence that his expectations had been accurate was reinforced by his visit to the small town of Deer Trail, Colorado, Wyeth stopped there on his way to Hash-Knife Ranch, approximately forty miles away, where he expected to work as a cowpuncher. He had spent fifty-five dollars for his rig: "blue shirt, corduroy breeches, hightop boots, belt and pistol, spurs, quirt, good saddle and bridle, blankets, rubber coat, paint box; and camera completes my outfit. . . . Thus, I shall pass into the land of sun and sky."

From the beginning of his experience beyond Denver, N. C. Wyeth was a participant in the life of the West. Diary entries and letters from this period show that he encountered varying circumstances, although at times variety must have escaped him. He began one letter to his mother: "Out of the west window, plains; out of the east, plains; out of the north window, plains; out of the south, plains." But on these plains he sketched and collected information.

Wyeth worked in one eventful roundup for a period he called "the wildest and most strenuous three weeks in my life."

When Wyeth returned to Denver, life seemed calm, and he rented a studio where he could give form on canvas to his recent adventures. He painted for two weeks and produced four major works: *A Bucking Horse in Camp*, *On the Circle*, *Roping Horses in the Corral*, and *Around the Grub Wagon*. These paintings were publicly exhibited in Denver for two or three weeks at Steiner's Gallery. They were Wyeth's first full-color efforts, and while he knew they were authentic in detail, he was concerned about the color: "The color in the West is magnificent and cannot be touched with paint and brush."

Wyeth saw a good deal more of that native color on visits to Indian reservations where he watched the trading and photographed and sketched Navajos. He traveled to Arizona, slept in hogans, and discovered that Indians were not happy to have their photographs taken. Perhaps this discovery is what induced N. C. to make some of the finest and most famous drawings of his career, beautiful pencil sketches of Navajo men and women.

Wyeth returned to Wilmington with mixed feelings: "How I hated to leave those Indians and how I shall miss the many long silent evenings spent with them in their 'hogans,' seated around a flaming pile of crakling pinon listening to the low plaintive moan of the wind as it swirled down the canyon. . . ." The West was clearly in his blood and on his mind. But a stronger influence was the career he had set for himself, the steady pursuit of successful illustration. He told his mother that he was not seeking another trip West. "I say No! I want money now and I'm going to knuckle right down and get rich. . . ."

Wyeth soon contributed a number of important western paintings as illustrations to *Scribner's*. His work was maturing and was superior to almost any other then available to publishers. From 1904 on, he was known to publishers and public as a western illustrator. With growing enthusiasm in 1905, Wyeth furnished illustrations for popular westerns in *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Harper's*, *The Ladies' Home Journal*, and other national magazines.

Wyeth's second trip West was sponsored by *The Outing Magazine* in early 1906. His destination was Grand County, Colorado, and he was to gather information regarding mine engineering. Once again he threw himself into his special experience. He rode a work train and acted as fireman, stoking engine fires in sub-zero weather. He wrote about it as "a grand and glorious trip full of incident."

The pace of Wyeth's life quickened in 1906. Commissions came in such numbers and from so many different sources that he seems to have been almost confused by the action. He said that he was "beginning to believe that illustrating is as hard as any other work. . . . I've stuck to it pretty steadily outside my western trips and I'm starting to feel it." Wyeth continued to provide many illustrations for popular western stories in *McClure's*, *Scribner's*, and *Outing*.

In August of 1906, the artist announced: "I have turned out the best picture I ever painted. It's a moonlight scene in the West. Eight miners digging through a 14-foot drift during intensely cold weather." This was probably *The Snow Shovels* (see page 38), one of four works for "How They Opened the Snow Road" by W. M. Raine and W. H. Eader. These extremely large canvases were reproduced in color by *Outing* in January, 1907. A restrained palette and careful use of light make the paintings stand out as a special group with unique characteristics.

Also in 1906 Wyeth anticipated his third trip West. He wanted to reach Billings, Montana, and planned carefully for the journey. But events crowded him, and he was able to make his travel time last only as far as the stockyards of Chicago and Kansas City. He never ventured West again. The year had been a time of great activity and production, but it had also been a time of important changes. In April he had married Carolyn Bockius of Wilmington, and throughout the year he had confronted some not-so-simple or pleasant aspects of the commercial illustrator's world. The pressures of commissions were strongly felt, and he had several serious difficulties with his mentor, Howard Pyle. N. C. was anxious for personal freedom, and his growing self-confidence suggested many changes in life style. He wrote: "As time goes by I seem to be drawing closer and closer to the quiet 'domestic' farm life. . . . Another thing! I don't believe any man who ever painted a great big picture did so by wandering from one place to another searching for interesting material. By the gods! There's almost an inexhaustible supply of subjects right around my back door."

WYETH began to paint nonwestern subjects with increasing frequency. Publishers offered him assignments relating to American history. The eastern woodland Indian became a special subject for him. Nonetheless, in 1907 he illustrated western subjects for both novels and magazines. He was pleased when an assignment from *Scribner's* resulted in the 1908 painting, *The Locating Engineer* (see page 41), a painting he often referred to as deserving of attention. He was also enthusiastic about his 1908 "Sun-Dance pictures," including *Calling the Sun-dance* and *Invocation to the Buffalo Herds*.

A notable event was the January, 1909, publication by *Scribner's* of N. C.'s western narrative "A Sheep-Herder of the South-West." It is notable because of the charming story and because of the excellence of the illustrations, among them some of his finest paintings. The story tells of Wyeth's experience with a Navajo boy who taught him much. The illustrations, however, are more generalized views of sheepherding. He commented, "One would hardly recognize them as mine, so different is the color arrangement and general technicalities." The illustrations include *Navajo Herder in the Foothills* (see page 35), a superbly colored painting of an Indian boy sitting on a hillside overlooking his herd. The dust rising around and above his sheep enhances the scene, as does the carefully balanced light on selected subjects.

By the time this narrative was read across the country, there was no question that N. C. Wyeth was attempting to

pull away from western work, despite his continuing fascination for the romance of the West. He told his family in 1908, "I am trying to instill into the minds of the magazine editors that I want subjects that are *local*, subjects that I can paint honestly and conscientiously. . . ." N. C. wanted to paint more landscapes, to be, as he would have said, more a painter and less an illustrator. He demonstrated his love for the countryside by painting more and more illustrations using the farms, farmers, and buildings of the Brandywine River valley as his subjects. The works were published in widely circulated magazines and books, especially after 1907.

The West was, however, the subject with which the public at that time associated Wyeth, and, in 1910, he responded to a newspaper writer's interest in this fact: "With five years of almost incessant work, mostly western in character, I have experienced a remarkable change. My ardor for the West has slowly, but with increasing impetus, been dwindling, until my desires to go there to paint its people are already lukewarm. The West appealed to me as it would to a boy, a sort of external effervescence of spirit seemed to be all that substantiated my work."

The change to other subjects was very gradual, and the West continued to concern Wyeth for many years. When, in 1909, *Scribner's* bought his new painting, *The Pay Stage*, they "bought it quick and pronounced it the very best I ever did for them." Amid woodland Indians, farm scenes, Colonial American figures, and medieval images, he occasionally fashioned the West with his brush and illustrated many books by well-known western authors.

In 1916, for *Hearst's* magazine, N. C. painted ten illustrations for "The Great West That Was" by William F. Cody. The most memorable painting among them is *A Fight on the Plains* (pages 36-37), which appeared with different captions in various publications. In this work, the artist painted his own portrait as one of the men in defense behind a dead mule barricade during an Indian attack. It is a carefully detailed work which inevitably evokes strong responses.

Wyeth built a large home and a large studio in Chadds Ford and felt he had found his place and his pace there. "At times I feel as though I would walk over one of these hills into a secluded valley and lie down, and there remain to grow slowly, oh, so slowly!" He raised five children near the Brandywine River, and the family began spending summers on the coast of Maine where he loved to paint local subjects, landscapes and seascapes. In 1921, he told a reporter for the *Boston Sunday Post* that he found the West "theatrical." He went on to say that the artist "may have the greatest sympathy for the people you meet, for the picturesqueness of their life and their traditions and clothing—but the time comes when his soul gets restless, and he finds that he has been enjoying a show in which he really has no fundamental part."

It has often been said that every artist is compelled to compose his autobiography, and it may be argued that N. C. Wyeth's art reflects his life to a large degree. It reflects his concern for a wide variety of contemporary and historical subjects and it reflects the enormous energy of the man. He wanted to be known as a painter more than as an illustrator, and he was a great American painter. His best paintings, from the early years until his death in 1945, are large works of superb technique, full of wonderful color, often full of action. Hardly any subject with which he worked appears to us more vividly than the American West. In the West he learned much about using color and showing the effects of light in painting. The early paintings resulting from his western travels did a great deal to establish his reputation among publishers and the public.

N. C. Wyeth painted thousands of illustrations. Probably the most famous and in the opinion of many, the best are the 1911 works for *Treasure Island*. He also illustrated *The Black Arrow*, *Kidnapped*, *Robin Hood*, *The Boy's King Arthur*, *The Yearling*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Mysterious Island*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, and book after book. He did seemingly countless illustrations for magazines. He painted murals and advertisements. Among his finest efforts are still lifes and landscapes painted for his personal pleasure. Viewed within the scope of his total achievement, his western paintings appear relatively few in number.

But the western work is wonderful. The West was the great romantic center of his youth, and he threw himself into it before his ties became home and family. His experience in the West resulted in paintings which for generations and to millions of people have brought beauty, joy, and a sense of special adventure. **AW**

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

This article draws upon material in Betsy James Wyeth, ed., *The Wyeths, the Letters of N. C. Wyeth, 1901–1945* (1971); and in Douglas Allen and Douglas Allen, Jr., *N. C. Wyeth* (1972).

James H. Duff, *Director of the Brandywine River Museum, is an authority on the life and works of N. C. Wyeth.*

COMING IN THE AMERICAN WEST:

PIONEER PHOTOGRAPHER WILLIAM HENRY JACKSON
ARMY GENERAL NELSON A. MILES
FRONTIER ARTIST WILLIAM DE LA MONTAGNE CARY
OLD-TIME COUNTRY FAIRS . . . AND MUCH MORE!

BASQUE SHEEPHERDER

(Continued from page 31)

been referred to as "American fever" in the minds of generation after generation of Basque youths.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, developments on both sides of the Atlantic profoundly altered what had been a rather elitist pattern of emigration. Independence movements in the New World stripped Spain of all her continental Latin American holdings, thereby closing to Basque emigrants certain opportunities in colonial commerce and administration. Meanwhile, in Europe the Basque area was devastated by the Napoleonic Wars and the First Carlist War (in which the Basques were on the losing side). When Uruguay and Argentina began to welcome renewed European immigration by the 1830s, they attracted a new type of Basque emigrant—the displaced peasant and the political refugee.

Life in the coastal cities of the fledgling Rio de la Plata nations was extremely difficult. However, the new wave of Basque immigrants found considerable opportunity in the countryside. In the sparsely settled pampas they quickly established themselves as sheepmen. Either moving to the margin of European settlement to claim virgin rangeland or by leasing tracts from the cattle-oriented, native-born *estancieros* ("ranchers"), Basques became ubiquitous sheepmen in several Pampean districts (notably southern Buenos Aires province) by the late 1830s. In the process they acquired considerable knowledge of sheep raising under frontier conditions.

With the discovery of gold in California, a number of Basques, notably some with sheep-raising experience in the Rio de la Plata region, joined the international tide of fortune-seeking "argonauts" who descended upon the area. By the mid-1850s several Basques from the mining camps had entered other pursuits. A few individuals, such as Domingo Amestoy, turned to sheep raising; in 1854 Amestoy signed a co-venture with *Don* Abel Stearns to partner a sheep outfit on the latter's cattle ranch in southern California. The Basque experience in that region must have seemed like a replay of the earlier Rio de la Plata life. During the 1850s the economic collapse of the California *dons*, the availability of vast tracts of public land, and the demand for meat products in the mining districts—all favored creation of a sheep industry.

By the end of the decade, Basque sheepmen were well ensconced in southern California. Indeed, it may well be that these early sheepmen established the basic pattern of open-range sheep husbandry that persists to this day in many districts of the American West. With their background as sheepmen under frontier conditions on the pampas and their knowledge of Pyrenean sheep transhumance, Basques were uniquely situated to initiate the practice of driving sheep bands between high-mountain summer pastures and lowland-desert winter areas. This form of sheep husbandry proved particularly adaptable in the arid interior of western North America with its topographic and climatic extremes.

In the main, early California Basque sheepmen were itinerants. They required little capital and no home base since they lived in tents and carried their worldly possessions with them on the back of a burro. As a man's band increased, he might send to Europe for a young assistant, usually a relative or a fellow villager. The newcomer would frequently take his wages in ewes, which he continued to run alongside those of his employer. When he had acquired enough animals to form a viable band (usually within three years), he simply struck out on his own in search of suitable range.

As this cycle was repeated over and over, the ranges of southern California soon became crowded. By the 1860s Basque sheepmen were pressing into California's San Joaquin Valley. By the 1870s they had spread into parts of Arizona, New Mexico, northern California, and Nevada. By the turn of the century, the itinerant Basque sheepman was a ubiquitous figure throughout the open-range districts of the American West. In addition, the Basques were in great demand as herders in outfits owned by Basques or non-Basques alike. It was generally felt that Basques had a special talent for sheep care and, more importantly, that they were best able to withstand the psychological strain of the solitude inherent in the herder's existence.

At the same time, Basques elicited considerable enmity. They were closely identified with the sheep industry which, in some areas, was anathema to cattle ranchers. Even in districts characterized by mixed cattle and sheep husbandry, the Basque itinerant operator was a controversial figure. By law, itinerants had as much claim to grazing rights on public land as did the settled operators, but by custom, the ranchers divided range rights among themselves. Consequently, they saw the itinerants as "tramps," undesirable foreigners in unfair competition with solid American citizens.

Occasionally the resulting confrontations led to violence. However, legislation proved to be the effective means of dealing with itinerants. Laws were passed designed to tax transient sheep more heavily than locally owned animals, or to prohibit sheep within a specified distance of private property. (Most of this legislation was subsequently declared unconstitutional.) On the national scene the settled ranching interests supported the enabling legislation for creation of the National Forest System (near the turn of the century) and the Taylor Grazing Act (1934)—all of which led to federal regulation of grazing on public lands. Since grazing privileges were allocated according to the recommendations of a board constituted of local ranchers, and then only of American citizens owning land within the district, the alien itinerants, Basques in the main, were usually excluded.

In the figure of an itinerant sheepman, then, Basques were regarded as the villains of the sheep industry; in this role they stimulated passage of some of the pivotal land

law of the American West. Not all Basques were in this category, however. In almost every sheep-raising district, settled Basque ranchers (respected by their neighbors) were themselves arrayed against the itinerants. Of even greater concern to the industry than the itinerant sheepman was the fact that the Basque herder had become indispensable by the early 1900s. He was the undisputed, unsung hero of the whole enterprise, the trustworthy individual who, for modest compensation, cared for a valuable sheep band under physically trying and psychologically stressful conditions.

In Basque consideration, on the other hand, herding was never viewed with vocational zeal. Rather, the average herder hoped to establish his own itinerant band, operate it for a few years, and then sell out and return to Europe to buy a farm or set up a small business. In light of the new restrictive legislation, the American West was becoming increasingly less attractive to Basques in Europe. At the same time immigration legislation during the 1920s severely hampered renewal of the herder labor pool. With an anti-southern-European bias, by 1924 legislation limited the annual quota of Spanish nationals allowed to enter the country to 131. While the French quota remained considerably higher, this did little to alleviate the growing shortage of herders. The total population of the French Basque homeland was less than 200,000; so, the large majority of Basque herders were being recruited in Spain.

By the Second World War the labor shortage in the sheep industry had reached crisis proportions. In the wake of a civil war, Spain's economy was prostrate; consequently, many Basques were willing to herd sheep in the American West. Since U.S. immigration regulations all but precluded their entry, a number of Basques jumped ship in American ports and made their way to the sheep districts. Their desperate employers were willing to engage in protracted legal battles to retain them. A common tactic was to pressure one's congressional delegation. A plethora of legislation, sometimes called the Sheepherders' Laws, was introduced in Congress to grant residency to individual illegal aliens. Between 1942 and 1961 some 383 men were granted stays in the United States under these provisions.

Such stopgap measures proved inadequate, and in 1950 Nevada's Senator Patrick McCarran, a former sheepman himself and author of restrictive immigration legislation, championed the ranchers' cause. After considerable complicated maneuvering, McCarran obtained special preference treatment for Basque herders. Under these provisions sheepmen's organizations were empowered to recruit herders in Spain. While the provisions of the program have varied, basically the herder was limited to a three-year contract which was renewable if the man first took a sojourn outside the United States, thereby ensuring that he could not meet the continued-residency requirement for filing for American citizenship. The employer advanced the herder's passage, which was deducted from his wages. Salary scale and working conditions were negotiated by representatives of the U.S. Department of Labor, the Spanish government, and the sheepmen's organizations.

During the early years of the program the Nevada Range Sheep Owners Association, the Wyoming Woolgrowers Association, and the California Woolgrowers Association —all instituted their own recruiting efforts. The California Range Association, which in 1960 became the Western Range Association, functioned on a national scale, its sole purpose being to implement the sheepherder program. From the outset that organization faced an extremely delicate task. On this side of the Atlantic it had to allay the suspicions of labor unions and the Department of Labor by demonstrating the need to import foreign workers. The sheepmen argued that American workers lacked the necessary tolerance, skills, and incentive for herding. To demonstrate its good faith the Association sponsored a course in sheep husbandry at Brigham Young University (the course foundered for lack of enrollment) and set up recruiting efforts on the Navajo reservation in Arizona (only a handful of Navajos signed on, and those who did broke their contracts within the first few months). To this day the Association must inform the employment services of each western state of its intentions before importing a herder. Theoretically, an American citizen would be given preference, but few have ever applied.

THE SITUATION was equally sensitive in Spain. While in reality the sheepmen were interested only in Basques (initially some of the ranchers even specified that they were interested only in herders from a particular village or district), the Spanish government rejected this stipulation, insisting that all Spanish nationals be eligible. In practice this requirement was largely circumvented by processing the herders in the American consulate at Bilbao and by focusing recruitment in the Basque area. Another delicate issue was the treatment of the herders in the American West. In 1966, for instance, a Basque chaplain with experience in Idaho denounced the program in the Spanish press at the time the Association was involved in renegotiating the contract, and the Spanish government hardened its position. Consequently, the United States government agreed to allow herders to apply for permanent-residency status upon successful conclusion of their three-year contract (by the end of 1976, 2,161 former herders had attained permanent residency in this fashion). While the men were technically required to continue in herding, this provision has not been enforced.

Between 1957 and 1970 the Western Range Association issued 5,495 sheepherder applications. Prior to 1965, 95 percent of the applicants were Basques, primarily from rural districts of Vizcaya and Navarra. During the late 1960s there was an increase in the number of non-Basque Spaniards who applied. However, in 1970, the "typical" sheepherder in the American West was still a young Basque male contracted to the Western Range Association.

There were profound problems with the program. Owing to the economic recovery of Spain, it was increasingly possible for men to earn as much in Europe as in America. Indeed, the economic incentive had diminished to the point that few were willing to sign a contract. Those who did

were motivated by the opportunity to acquire a nest egg through the enforced savings inherent in a life of social isolation. Others were willing to undergo three years of herder tribulations in order to qualify for permanent residency in the United States. However, none regarded the wage scale (in the late 1970s, $425 monthly plus room and board; $450 in California) as particularly lucrative. For their part the sheepmen were increasingly less impressed with the quality of the new generation of Basque youth. In their estimation the recent herders were more frivolous, irresponsible, and demanding than their predecessors.

Faced with a shrinking pool of willing Basque candidates for sheepherder contracts and a waning enthusiasm for young Basques by western sheepmen, the Western Range Association modified its recruiting efforts in the early 1970s. In the Basque region itself attempts to obtain herders were made in areas that had previously been ignored. Traditionally, the herders were drawn from the mountain and coastal villages of eastern Vizcaya and the Bidasoa River drainage of northern Navarra. The herders were therefore, in the main, Basque speakers of rural (if not necessarily sheepraising) backgrounds. Increasingly, the herders were drawn from Basque urban centers like Bilbao and San Sebastián, from rural Guipúzcoa, and central and southern Navarra and Alava. The new recruits were generally not Basque speakers and came from a cultural context different from that of the generations who established the reputation of the Basque sheepherder in the American West. At the same time the Association broadened its efforts to other parts of Spain and to Peru (1971) and Mexico (1973).

On balance, during the past decade there have been major changes in the ethnic profile of the sheepherding profession. In 1970, the typical herder was a Vizcayan or Navarrese Basque-speaking individual of rural origin. On December 31, 1976, of the 742 herders under contract, 433 (or 58 percent) were from Latin America (271 Peruvians, 161 Mexicans, and 1 Colombian). Of the remaining 309 men, only 106 were culturally Basque. This is to say that by the late 1970s, five-sixths of the contract herders of the American West were either Latin Americans or non-Basque Spanish nationals.

It is therefore clear that the Basque herder is a figure fast vanishing from the western scene. If this is due in part to developments in Europe, including the fact that since 1974 the Association has been negotiating a new agreement with the Spanish government, it should be emphasized that it also reflects the recent and rapid decline of the open-range sheep industry. During the past decade, for instance, the number of herders under contract to the Association has been more than halved. In light of chronic labor shortages, opposition from environmentalists, increased federal regulation of the ranges and sheepherder working conditions, sharp increases in grazing fees, and greater losses to predators since prohibition of poisons for their control, many sheepmen have abandoned the business, and sheep numbers are declining rapidly throughout the region. This is true despite the fact that wool and lamb prices during the period have been quite good. It may be, therefore, that the changing ethnic profile of the sheepherding profession is but a footnote in the final chapter of the history of open-range sheep husbandry in the American West. **AW**

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SAM HOUSTON

(Continued from page 12)

Houston's chest, Houston lifted Stanbery's feet in the air and "struck him elsewhere," which must be interpreted as a Victorian euphemism.

The affray brought Houston before the House of Representatives, though he was not a member. Francis Scott Key, the poet-lawyer, represented him before Congress. Meanwhile, Houston gave Washington society and its press the sort of sideshow in which it glories to this day.

Typically for that period in his life Houston sat up drinking with friends on the night before his own appearance before the House. The next morning he couldn't even hold down coffee. But when his turn came to speak, he stood straight and faced a standing-room-only crowd that included the diplomatic corps, the military, and highly placed civilians. Houston spoke without straining: "I can never forget that reputation, however limited," he said in an almost conversational tone that reached to the galleries, "is the high boon of heaven. . . . Though the plowshare of ruin has been driven over me and laid waste to my brightest hopes . . . I have only to say . . . 'I seek no sympathies, nor need;/The thorns which I have reaped are of the tree/I planted; they have torn me and I bleed.' "

The gallery was with him. One woman was heard to say, "I had rather be Sam Houston in a dungeon than Stanbery on a throne!" For half an hour Houston talked seriously, intensely, showing no evidence of a monumental hangover.

He cited Julius Caesar, Oliver Cromwell, Napoleon Buonaparte, William Blackstone, and St. Paul; he retraced the tyrannies that had brought down Greece and Rome. He had committed, he said, only a crime of "impulse" after being almost driven to it by his opponent's charges. Otherwise he was guilty of no crime for which Congress could punish him without invading his private rights.

Finally, as Houston gazed at the American flag framing Lafayette's portrait, his declamation soared to new heights: "So long as that flag shall bear aloft its glittering stars . . . so long . . . shall the rights of American citizens be preserved safe and unimpaired—till discord shall wreck the spheres—the grand march of time shall cease—and not one fragment of all creation be left to chafe the bosom of eternity's waves."

At this point the gallery would have given Houston the White House. But Congress, more deliberate, debated four days before deciding that Sam Houston should be reprimanded. The Speaker announced, "I do reprimand you accordingly."

Stanbery wasn't through. He brought criminal charges of assault and then chaired an investigating committee into the fraud charge. For the assault Houston was fined $500, which he never paid. By a split decision the investigating committee acquitted him of fraud in a protracted trial that threatened to become the Watergate of the 1830s.

Stanbery lost more than just two cases out of three. He resurrected Sam Houston. Before the trials Houston was, in his terms, "a man of broken fortune and blasted reputation." But Houston, who had an actor's and a politician's (redundant terms possibly?) instinct for knowing when an audience turns in one's favor, later observed: "I was dying out and had they taken me before a justice of the peace and fined me ten dollars it would have killed me; but they gave me a national tribune for a theatre, and that set me up again." With his trial Sam Houston had returned in triumph to the white man's world. Redemption was his.

WHILE HOUSTON was on trial for caning Stanbery, he annoyed President Jackson's enemies by coming and going at will in the White House. If the president's relationship was not that of a surrogate father, it was at least avuncular and sponsoring, as it had been since the two men had endured the Indian wars together earlier in the century.

The other place that Houston seemed to come and go at will was Texas, which was geographically intimate with Houston's new residence in Arkansas Territory. What was he doing there? The answers are as numerous as the people interrogated. He wrote a Tennessee cousin that he had business in Texas "of importance to his pecuniary interest," and that "I will practice law, and with excellent prospects of success." He also wrote of "several minor matters I am engaged in." Houston knew how to write and talk without really revealing anything. Today's press would have had a field day interviewing him; he would have raised all kinds of possibilities, filling newspapers and the air with speculations while seldom contributing any hard news. He reminds me of the late Dizzy Dean, who during one day gave three New York reporters "exclusive" interviews, each with a contradictory set of facts regarding his background. Sportswriters haven't resolved the confusion yet! Houston would have approved of that boy.

In one memoir Houston is quoted as intending to become a herdsman and spend the rest of his life "in the tranquillity of the prairie solitudes." He could no more have tolerated a herdsman's life than his twentieth-century opposite number Lyndon Johnson could have remained a lifetime, high school debate coach. Houston was created for action.

"Several minor matters" were the operative words in Houston's remark above. Results of the "minor matters" are too well known to detail. Sam Houston showed up in Texas in time for a fight. He had been in the region only a few months when he was chosen to represent Nacogdoches as one of five delegates to a convention to decide on Texas policy toward mother Mexico. At the convention of 1833 he aligned himself with the "war party" opposed to Stephen F. Austin, often hailed as the "father of Texas," though a bachelor. Austin advocated a patient policy toward Mexico. Houston was named chairman of the committee to frame a constitution for a state of Texas, if it should be separated from its current status as an appendage of Coahuila. And he reflected the antibank bias of his mentor, Jackson, by helping to obtain a provision in the proposed constitution that no bank or any other moneyed corporation should be chartered. (In fact, Texas did not legalize banking until the end of Reconstruction, so deep was the antibank feeling.)

As the rift between Mexico and Texas deepened, Houston began urging his fellow Texans to break their connections with Mexico City. Older Texans urged moderation, believing that Mexico's excesses were caused by its inability to stabilize its own government and pointing out that the Mexicans had been unbelievably generous and usually tolerant toward the Anglo-American settlers. But the newer Texans had little patience, coupled with a huge dosage of yanqui intolerance for anything and anybody who was different. Although Houston could be extremely understanding of Indian inconsistencies, he detested the erratic Mexican government and joined the hotspurs in demanding separation.

By the spring of 1836 many Texans were ready to declare their independence of Mexico. Houston's name was put up as a delegate to represent Nacogdoches at the independence convention to be held at the beginning of March. He was defeated. But he was elected as a delegate from Refugio, more than three hundred miles away, despite his having been there only once as a military scout. Thus does chance intervene to forward careers.

When at the beginning of February Houston arrived at Washington-on-the-Brazos, where the convention was to be held, he "created more sensation than . . . any other man. He . . . seems to take pains to ingratiate himself with everybody." The convention met while Santa Anna was besieging the Alamo, whose defenders thought they were fighting for restoration of the liberal Mexican constitution

of 1824. But the delegates, 150 miles behind the battle line, had their eyes on independence. They made their declaration on March 2, 1836, Houston's forty-third birthday, and presented Old Sam with a birthday present of the rank of major general and a mandate to organize and command an army, plus an intimation that he was to hold that command until he had defeated the Mexicans. As a leading newspaper in Texas observed, "No general ever had more to do."

Again, Houston provoked controversy. The jury is still out on his abilities as a field commander. At first he was roundly denounced, for all he did was retreat and avoid battle, which as subsequent leaders have discovered, does not fit the yanqui psyche. Did he withdraw, Fabian fashion, until he lured Santa Anna into a trap? Or did he retreat until he had nowhere else to hide, after which the luck of the cornered took over? Whichever side you choose, the one indisputable fact is that Sam Houston led his troops to their only significant victory in the Texas revolution, but it proved to be the last battle—at San Jacinto in a bayou bend twenty-five miles east of present-day Houston on April 21, 1836. In eighteen brief minutes the Texans captured 730 and killed 630 Mexicans against 9 of their own killed and 34 wounded. The next day Santa Anna himself was taken, the war was over, Texas was actually if not officially free, and Sam Houston was being idolized by most Texans and once again by a host of people back in the United States.

THE EIGHTEEN MINUTES at San Jacinto rescued Houston once and for all from the oblivion that had faced him when he walked out of the governor's chair in Tennessee and out of the United States. For years more sedate people east of the Mississippi had clucked about how he had chucked his one golden opportunity. Now at forty-three years of age he was back as a man of action, a noticeable man. Again, redemption, as the Victorians viewed it, was his. While the idolatry ran high, Houston became the first president of the infant Republic of Texas.

And now that Houston was a Texan his Cherokee marriage to Tiana Rogers was no longer observed. With a private divorce from Eliza Allen following shortly, he was a free man. Most of his advisers thought he should remain that way.

However, Houston's third marriage, in 1840, proved happy and lasting. He really got two women for the price of one. On a swing through Alabama he met Margaret Lea, tall, brown-haired, violet-eyed and twenty. He was forty-seven. They both fell, though evidence exists that Margaret had kept an eye on Houston ever since he had debarked on crutches in New Orleans amid a wild demonstration of welcome a month after his victory at San Jacinto. He had been dressed in tatters, with a stinking rag wrapped around his still-bloody ankle wound. As attendants tried to lift him onto a litter, he had fainted. Instead of being repulsed by his dishevelment, Margaret had found him romantic. Evidently she had decided that this wild man was fated for her, though the odds against a young girl from Alabama getting acquainted with the hero of far-off Texas were almost insurmountable, akin to those of all the young girls in Ogallala and Ogden who know that the Prince of Wales remains a bachelor because he was meant for one of them.

But a couple of years later Houston and Margaret did meet through relatives, and the only barrier to their pursuit of happiness was Margaret's mother, Nancy, widow of a Baptist minister, who did not want anyone with as storied a past as Houston hanging around her daughter. After an intensive exchange of love letters, the couple decided to wed. Margaret wrote Houston that she was coming to Texas and named the boat. Houston was in Galveston to meet it. As he stepped from a dory to greet his intended, he saw only his prospective mother-in-law. Where was Margaret? In Alabama still. "General Houston, my daughter . . . goes forth in the world to marry no man. The one who receives her hand will receive it in my home," said Nancy.

And so Houston wound up in Marion, Alabama, where Margaret was firm in her intention to marry this rascal. The fact was, her mother liked Houston. But unlike the Allen parents, she saw the pitfalls as clearly as she felt the glamour of such a union. As the wedding was about to take place in the Lea residence on May 9, 1840, still another Lea relative pulled Houston aside to say that no wedding would take place until Houston explained the Eliza Allen debacle. The fiddlers were already tuned and ready to start the wedding music. But Houston told Margaret's relative to "call his fiddlers off." He would never break his silence on that subject.

Margaret did not care about Eliza, at least not enough to deny herself Sam Houston as a husband. The wedding took place, and Houston gave Texas a new heroine. Bernard Bee, Houston's former secretary of war, predicted the marriage wouldn't last six months. "In all my acquaintances with life," he wrote to a friend, "I have never met an Individual more totally disqualified for domestic happiness" than Houston.

Bee was wrong. Margaret and Sam lived together until his death a quarter of a century later, Nancy proved to be a doting if somewhat dictatorial mother-in-law, and Houston quit his notorious carousing habits. The raven was finally caged, and he liked it.

AS PRESIDENT of the Republic of Texas, Houston showed a talent for organization and an ability to keep problems from aggravating into major quarrels. Most Texans felt he was too lenient with the captive Santa Anna. They wanted the Mexican leader hanged, quartered, stoned, anything but alive. Houston saw Santa Anna as an extension of Texan diplomacy and sent him to Washington under guard as a representative of Texas's hopes for independence. Nor could most Texans ever figure where Houston stood on annexation to the United States; most still can't.

After lying out a term, as required by the constitution of the Republic of Texas, Houston came back for a second round as president at the beginning of the 1840s,

with annexation to the United States the crucial topic in most people's minds. By now Jackson was long gone as president, which considerably reduced Houston's influence in Washington. When Houston's second term ended, he was succeeded by Dr. Anson Jones, his hand-picked choice, while in Washington James K. Polk, another Tennesseean and Jacksonian, was bearing down on the American presidency. The good-old-boy system is not a twentieth-century invention.

Uneven as ever, Houston refused to encourage a filibustering expedition into Mexico and turned down requests—nay, demands—to rescue Texans held prisoner as a result of the Mier foray below the Rio Grande. Observed Houston, "The true interest of Texas is to maintain peace . . . and to cultivate her soil." When an outbreak of citizens' meetings insisted that Houston had the wide discretionary powers to order an invasion, Old Sam retorted, "The indulgence of intemperate expressions and feelings can produce no possible good." Indeed, he insisted, "No calamity has ever befallen Texas . . . but what has been caused by a disregard of law and substituting in its place a 'wide discretion.' " Still he called the Mexicans "an imbecile and ignorant people," too "vain" to consider consequences.

Truth was, though Texas was the size of continental France with considerably more geographical resources, the republic was having a hard time staying afloat. It needed the United States more than the United States needed it, and Houston was pragmatist enough to realize the situation. Houston threatened. Either annex Texas now or forget it, he warned.

Still his dream of a Texas empire persisted. In May, 1844, he wrote William S. Murphy, the United States chargé to Texas, of his vision of Texas's destiny—a nation of Europeans, all committed to working and planning, stretching across northern Mexico all the way to Oregon. Oh, what a nation that could be! But in 1845 Texas joined the United States, and Houston saw it become just another star in a flag that now contained twenty-eight such stars. The dream should have died. Still, like many Americans, he couldn't resist the idea that "the Anglo-Saxon race [must] pervade the whole southern extremity of this vast continent."

After Texas became a state, Houston served as one of its United States senators, and was regularly touted for the presidency by people, both North and South, who favored strong leadership. He was caught up in national issues, particularly the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska bill. He regularly voted opposite to the thinking of his natural constituency, which had a strong southern drift. Most southern politicians in Washington looked on him as a traitor to his section, but he always replied that Texas had joined the United States, not the South. Furthermore, he was explicit in branding southern radicals as unfit for leadership.

And in 1858 Houston set the Senate's teeth on edge when he introduced a resolution proposing that the United States establish a protectorate over Mexico and Central America. Piously he told his fellow senators that he did not offer "this resolution . . . with a view to extending our dominion, but with a view of improving our neighborhood. The mixture of races [in the United States] causes an irresistible impetus, that must overshadow and overrule that whole region" from Mexico through Costa Rica. The resolution never reached a vote. But he kept bringing it up, like a small boy pestering his mother for more cookies.

So incensed were members of the Texas legislature by his constant ridiculing of Jefferson Davis, the secretary of war, and by his stand for union that despite his vote for the proslavery Lecompton Constitution of Kansas in 1858, they chose his successor as senator ahead of the usual election time. It was a studied insult to the old leader. Texans then overruled their legislature by electing Houston as governor, where he again fell quickly into disfavor because he opposed secession. To him, the United States came first. In the interim between his deposition as senator and his election as governor, Houston resumed talk of pastoral pursuits but still dreamed of being president. He saw two ways to achieve that honor, by saving the Union from the suicide of secession and fratricidal war, and by extending the power of the United States over Mexico.

Houston hid his grand designs behind a cloak of reason —Mexico by 1858 was in the throes of its fourteenth revolution in a little more than a third of a century of existence. (Houston alleged twenty-five revolutions, but he was making a point.) The United States, he argued, could bring Mexico into good government and the good life that goes with such an institution. Despite his adamance against southern secession, he hinted at Texas secession to carry out his plan if the United States should be indisposed to go along. When the Senate refused to vote on his resolution advocating a protectorate, he not only threatened independent Texas action but a movement by unidentified "humane men" who would be willing to "arrest the cruelties on, and to stop the murders of, a defenseless people."

On another occasion, when a Pacific railroad bill was under consideration in 1859, Houston interjected a prediction that Texas would soon extend its borders to Mexico City, where it would run into California moving down the Pacific coast to the same terminus. He further predicted a harmonious union of the two potential empires.

Texas newspapers took up the cry in behalf of Houston's plan, as did English holders of Mexican bonds (Mexico was in arrears on payments of interest). Encouraged, Houston made a speech, the only one in his gubernatorial campaign of 1859, in which he asserted that a protectorate over Mexico would show the United States as "a nationality in which freedom exists" with "strength to maintain it."

Mexico was vulnerable to filibustering at this point. Mexican liberals under Benito Juárez were attempting to overthrow a reactionary central government, while Juan Cortina was depredating both sides of the Texas-Mexico border without declaring for much of anyone except himself. Houston knew he could get money to mount an expedition; could he get the men and materiel? The Texas Rangers were a possibility, and he had always kept the Indians in his camp.

The Rangers may have staved off a Texas invasion of Mexico by pacifying the border in late 1859 and early

1860. But in February, 1860, Houston sent two emissaries to sound out Colonel Robert E. Lee, then in command of federal troops in the area, whether he would be "willing to aid . . . to pacificate Mexico" as a protector in case Houston became president of the United States. Lee, ever correct, replied that he was opposed to filibustering and would act only "in conformity to the Constitution and laws of the country." Despite this refusal, which was really a rebuke from the high-minded Lee, Houston kept the heat on Washington, sending men and letters indicating that Texas would raise ten thousand men on thirty days' notice, and suggesting that the federal government should send proportionately more.

From Kentucky, from Pennsylvania, from New Jersey came offers to help Houston lead troops into Mexico, each with a prediction that such a grand filibuster would so inflame the American spirit as to promote its originator to the nation's highest office. Volunteers applied from most of the northern states and some of the southern ones. A man in New Orleans volunteered ten thousand muskets; a man in Philadelphia, $50,000. Another group promised that an expedition would be financed by British capitalists, who in addition would grant an annuity to Houston's wife. Houston had struck a national, even an international, chord, and he must have been mesmerized by the sound. The cause of empire was a sacred charge throughout the nineteenth century.

BUT THERE in the late spring of 1860 the threat ended. Whether Houston was sincere in wishing to extend the American flag over Mexico or whether he was fanning a fire of manifest destiny into a presidential draft cannot be ascertained. A disruptive fire that was smoldering within the United States would create a convulsion more nearly justifying Mexico's establishing a protectorate over the United States than the reverse.

Houston would go down fighting, augmenting his pragmatic, patriotic oratory of the 1850s with new bursts of rhetoric supporting the Union. The legislature demanded a special session to denounce the federal and northern state governments, but Houston stood firm. One reporter from the *Galveston News* obtained the statement from Houston that while he had rescued Texas several times in the past, this time it could go to hell by itself; "he would not go with her."

Houston took one last look at empire. To the burgeoning Confederacy he issued the warning that sooner than join the disunionists, Texas would travel in a third direction—her own "separate Nationality. . . . Texas has views of expansion not common to many of her sister States. Although an empire within herself, she feels that there is an empire beyond, essential to her security. She will not be content to have the path of her destiny clogged. The same spirit of enterprise that founded a Republic here, will carry her institutions Southward and Westward." When that sentiment became known, Houston lost the support of both the secessionists and the federal-minded.

But Texas was hell-bent on destruction along with the other secessionists, and in early 1861 left the Union. Undoubtedly Houston, although sixty-eight years old, could have mustered support for separate nationhood, but he did not want to shed the blood of brothers. Rumor held that the new president, Abraham Lincoln, would offer the old warrior a position in his cabinet, perhaps secretary of war, as a reward for his steadfast unionist sentiments. And Lincoln did offer troops to keep the governor in office. But Houston was tired of Texans' rebellious inclinations and determined to leave office and let the state sink without him. And sink it did, along with the other ten states of the Confederacy.

Out of office, Houston came around. Two months after being deposed as governor, he said in a speech at Independence, Texas, "The time has come when a man's section is his country. I stand by mine."

He had two more years, holding his family together by selling firewood. Sometimes Houston was mentioned as the next governor, but he was getting too old and ill for the political wars. Right after Vicksburg and Gettysburg, on July 26, 1863, he died of pneumonia. One of his everlasting enemies, E. H. Cushing, summed him up in an editorial in the *Houston Tri-Weekly Telegraph*: "He has not always been right, nor has he always been successful, but he has always kept the impress of his mind upon the times in which he has acted."

That he did.

Big Drunk. Big Dealer. Big Dreamer. Great Designer, in Llerena Friend's phrase. From the 1820s to 1861 Sam Houston was like a larger-than-life stink bug in America's life. No matter how many times you plugged his hole and pressed him down, he always reappeared somewhere else, as tangible a factor as ever. With his cool blue eyes, his Roman senator's brow, and his oversize but graceful frame, he could stare down the most formidable antagonist. But he had a dreamer's heart connected with a doer's organizational skill, and each shared in making him Texas's most noteworthy adopted son.

No, that's wrong. Typically Houston adopted Texas, for in many ways he was larger than the infant republic and the fledgling state. He was the parent, and Texas was his offspring. As a parent, though he himself was often personally undisciplined, he scolded, spanked, cajoled, and threatened Texas until he shaped it into a wayward entity that still hasn't lived up to the standards and images he set for it. **AW**

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CARLETON E. WATKINS

(Continued from page 15)

made during the summer of 1866. Whitney to Brewer: "Watkins is on the spot, with a most comfortable camp, & has taken many fine pictures, some of these I think will surpass anything he had ever done . . . when he left the valley he went to the Sentinel Dome and blazed a trail [to the edge of the cliff]. The view from this point I think the finest that can be made." Later, Brewer enthusiastically agreed with Whitney's observation: "Watkins's photographs have arrived, and are *magnificent*, it is the greatest present I have ever received in my life!"

Many of Watkins's financial difficulties had to do with his inability to work in the field producing new views and at the same time to superintend effectively his business interests in San Francisco and elsewhere. More of an artist than a businessman, Watkins sometimes ran so short of cash that he was unable even to finance his photographic trips into the wilderness. In order to go to Oregon and the Columbia River area in 1867, for example, Watkins was forced to borrow the wherewithal from Whitney. Once there he found the weather nearly impossible. Whitney to Brewer: "It has been raining ten days in Portland & [Watkins] was watching his toes to see the webs that started between them—Oregon [equals] webfeet . . . !"

Although Watkins's employees were generally competent in printing photographs and fulfilling orders, they were not error-free. Even one slip-up could have dire consequences. Whitney to Brewer: "Watkins has some fine photographs of scenery in [Utah] . . . one is the best such picture I've seen. [However,] his printer broke 8 of the best negatives (biggest size) in one fell swoop."

During the winter of 1871–72, Watkins moved his San Francisco establishment (named the Yo Semite Gallery to publicize his landscape work) into expanded facilities. A contemporary business guide (1872) complimented Watkins's lavish display: "The walls of the [gallery] . . . are adorned with one hundred and twenty-five of those superb views of Pacific Coast scenery which have given Watkins a reputation world-wide . . . here also may be found stereoscopic views by the thousands." Mass producing stereoscopic views was an important way of ensuring a steady business, but it meant hiring more employees. Watkins also began offering portrait services from this location. Such business expansion involved a considerable increase in borrowed capital, and Watkins found himself even more financially vulnerable.

The failure of the Bank of California in 1874, coupled with Watkins's unfortunate borrowing, resulted in the loss of the Yosemite Art Gallery to a competitor. Included in the bankruptcy loss were many of Watkins's hard-won landscape negatives, subsequently reissued by the new owner. In a letter to a close friend, Watkins recalled this sad loss with intense bitterness: "The old negatives are gone . . . as well as everything else that I had. In other words that d--- thief of a crook has got everything away from me, and I don't propose to cry about it, but to give him h---."

STRIPPED OF HIS GALLERY and his negative collection, Watkins began the arduous task of rebuilding his shattered inventory. He rephotographed many of the same sites that his magnificent images had made famous, producing a "Watkins' New Series" of views to replace those negatives lost during the foreclosure. In 1876 he traveled to Nevada and photographed the Comstock Mines. While on this trip, Watkins met Frankie for the first time, and she soon came to work for him. They were married in 1879 on Watkins's fiftieth birthday.

Ironically, Watkins became reassociated with the Yosemite Art Gallery as a "photographer," operating out of a gallery in the Palace Hotel. It was during this bleak period that he wrote his "spuds" letter to Frankie from southern California. After some time, Watkins became the manager of this gallery but not the owner.

Watkins's responsibilities increased with the birth of his daughter Julia in 1881 and his son Collis in 1883. Throughout much of the next decade, Watkins plied his trade diligently and without respite but with declining financial success. Watkins's letters to Frankie continued to reflect the anguish of his position: "I drag along awful slow between the smoke and the rain . . . and if the elements were not enough to worry me, a spark from an engine set fire to my tent last week and burned it half up . . . it took a couple of days to repair damages, and of course money talking about money."

Shortly after this incident Watkins reached Portland, writing from there in September of 1882: "How I would like to be there tonight and get a hug from both of you [Julia was then about two years old]. I never had the time seem so long to me . . . and I am not half done with my work, in fact hardly commenced." His letter closed on a happier thought, however, as he remembered his wife's pregnancy: "Tell Julia that her papa wants a big hug, and ever-so-many kisses and he hopes that the Little Cradle will have a tenant with a *handle to him* one of these days."

In most of the letters exchanged between Watkins and his wife, he showed a strong streak of good humor. He constantly encouraged and reassured her, usually with a fine western analogy: "Don't let yourself be imposed upon because you are little. Show em your *ears* now and then, kick out from behind occasionally, and tell em you are the little brown mule from Nevada and you don't let anybody *ride* over you."

Even in the face of adversity, Watkins's letters often sparkled with wit: "Got the rent paid at last . . . wore one shirt 17 days. There's economy for you. Had this one shirt on all week, and of course the other has *not* gone to the wash. There is one consolation—the shirt *suits* the suit—there are only 2 buttons left on the vest, and the wind plays Yankee Doodle through the place I set down on."

By 1890, however, Watkins had reached a truly major impasse in his career. During the previous decade, he had obtained many of his commissions largely on his earlier reputation as a quality photographer. While his work con-

tinued to be superb, the marketplace was becoming glutted with similar work selling at cut-rate prices. Nearly sixty-one years old, Watkins found his resiliency and physical stamina for carrying on greatly impaired.

Beginning in June 1890, Watkins was once again in the field with his camera, this time in Montana. His assignment was to photograph the copper mining operations in Butte and Anaconda, including flash-light views inside the mine shafts. Crippled by arthritis and suffering from periodic spells of vertigo, Watkins sent sadly poignant letters home: "The mine is full of bad air . . . caught cold in a wet room, and yesterday I was so 'bunged-up' that I could scarcely move. . . . Nasty work, and I don't believe that it will turn out worth a dam. . . . I am getting sick literally and figuratively."

The job dragged on, with one delay following another. By late October, Watkins was still trying to finish his assignment: "[your letter] came today and finds me boxed up in the [railroad] car and a snowstorm raging outside. . . . You see I am still in this horrible hole. Froze up, there has been continual snow and wind and hail and sleet . . . and with all my other troubles my hands are awful. It is bad enough to be poor, and not to have anything to eat, without being sick in the bargain."

Although Watkins undertook several other major assignments during the early nineties, he was fast nearing the end of his rope—both financially and physically. Worst of all, he was losing his eyesight. In sympathy, his long-time friend Collis P. Huntington deeded Watkins a parcel of ranch land near Capay. Unfortunately, it was largely unimproved and failed to provide the much-needed income. For the most part, Watkins continued to live in San Francisco, attempting to sell copies of his earlier images. For a while his son Collis helped, but he lacked talent and interest.

By 1903, Watkins was almost totally blind. With the aid of his son, he entreated the World's Fair Commission to include his photographs in the Saint Louis Exposition, but he was unsuccessful. At about this time, Watkins was befriended by Charles B. Turrill, a San Francisco photographer. Greatly moved by the seriousness of the old man's plight, Turrill wrote to California governor George C. Pardee, seeking assistance: "You know him and his worth and the labor of love that has made him do so much that benefitted the State, and in his old age has left him poor and infirm."

Negotiations and entreaties continued for many months, with Turrill doing all he could to interest the state in purchasing views from Watkins. Finally, it was agreed that a selection of Watkins's images would be purchased for inclusion in the Lewis and Clark Exposition in Portland which featured a historical theme. Elation turned to dismay, however, when the state failed to pay Watkins for the prints. By February 1906, he was forced to seek redress directly from Pardee. Turrill also reminded the governor that "Watkins needs speedy help if he is to receive the benefit personally!"

In the meantime, Turrill continued his attempts to interest the state in buying Watkins's "historically significant" photographs. On Sunday, April 15, 1906, H. C. Peterson, curator of Sutter's Fort Historical Museum, was persuaded to visit Watkins. Peterson agreed that Watkins's works were in need of immediate preservation; marked for early removal was a trunk "filled with dozens of rare daguerreotypes, including that of [John] Sutter at Sutter's Mill." The curator promised to begin moving the most precious items the following Sunday, but this was not to be. On Wednesday, April 18, the San Francisco earthquake struck Watkins savagely, "wrecked his place . . . and the subsequent fire consumed everything." Dazed and bitterly disappointed at the loss of his life's work, Watkins was led forcibly from his burning studio. "He lost everything but the clothes on his back," wrote Turrill to Pardee. "He was led to my place and left the day of the earthquake . . . he has slept on the hillside with me for two nights, but that is too rough for him."

Carleton Watkins never recovered from the shock of this final tragedy. Heartbroken, he retired to his small ranch at Capay where he lived until 1910 when his family had him committed to Napa State Hospital. He died there on June 23, 1916.

Today, we remember Carleton Watkins as the "Master of the Grand View" and revere his memory as the finest wet-plate photographer of the American West. His wonderful photographs are greatly prized and collected with the same avidity that is afforded great art. Sadly, Watkins would have made more money "raising spuds." **AW**

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

Carleton E. Watkins has been the subject of numerous articles and essays in recent years. In addition, almost every book dealing with western nineteenth-century landscape photography includes Watkins as a paragon of that medium. Watkins's first biographer and the only one who knew him personally was Charles B. Turrill who wrote "An Early California Photographer: C. E. Watkins," (*News Notes of California Libraries*, January, 1918). Recent works include: Karen and William R. Current, *Photography and the Old West* (1978); Weston J. Naef, et al, *Era of Exploration: The Rise of Landscape Photography in the American West, 1860–1885* (1975); John Coplans, "C. E. Watkins at Yosemite," (*Art in America*, November/December 1978); James Alinder, editor, *Carleton E. Watkins, Photographs of the Columbia River and Oregon* (1979); Pauline Grenbeaux, guest editor of special Watkins issue of *California History*, Fall 1978.

The illustrations which accompany this article, while typical of Watkins's photographic technique, do not do justice to the large size and rich spectacle of his original images. Major holdings of vintage Watkins's photographs in the West include: The California Room, California State Library, Sacramento; The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; The California Historical Society, San Francisco; The Oakland Museum, Oakland; The Bender Rare Book Room, Stanford University Library, Stanford; The Huntington Library, San Marino; Special Collections, University of Southern California Library, Los Angeles; Research Library, Yosemite National Park.

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